Sept. 23, 1985

THE NEW YORKER

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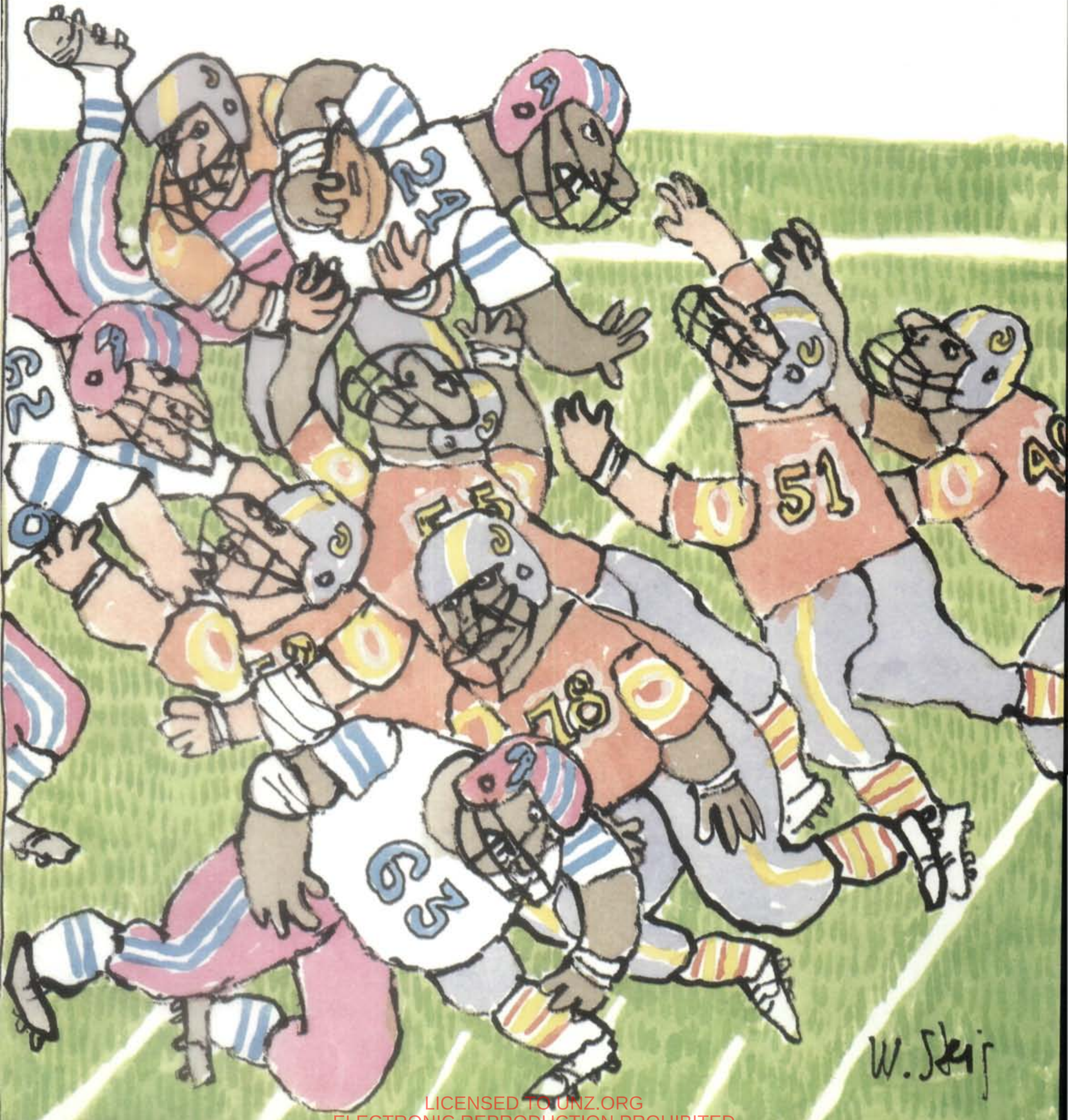
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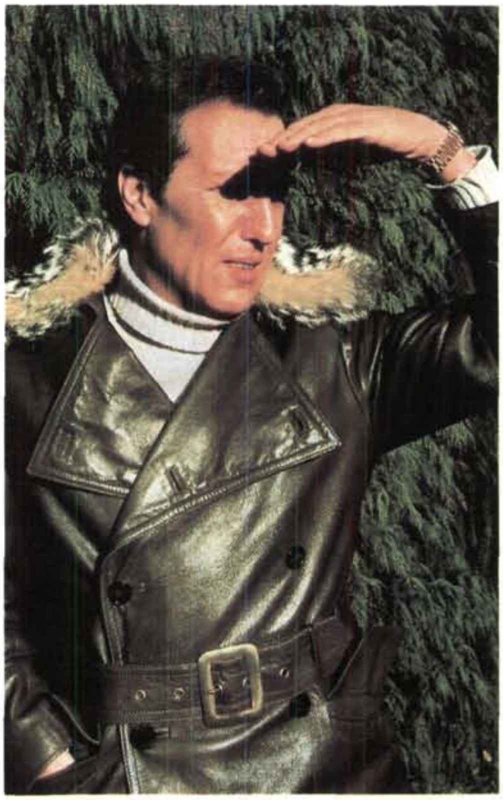

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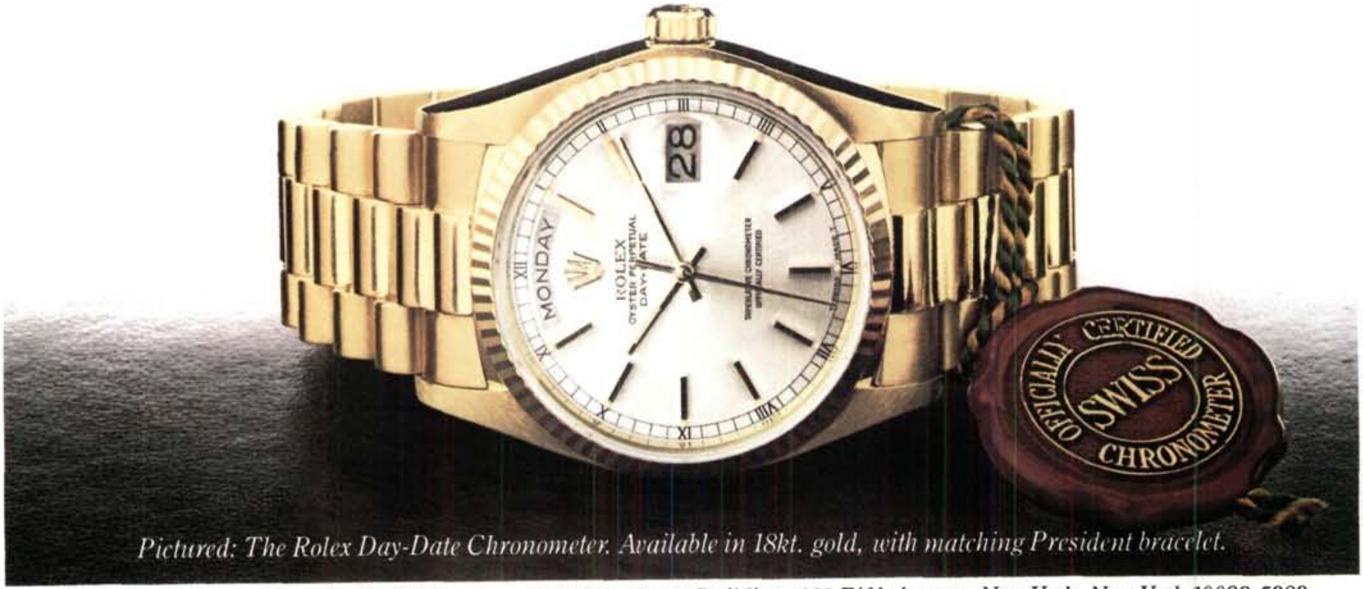

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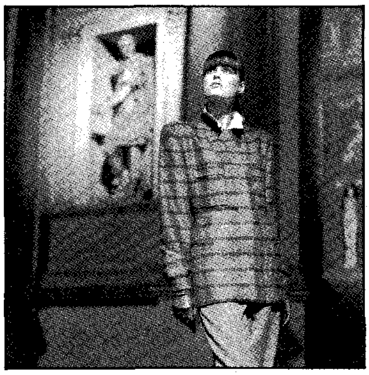

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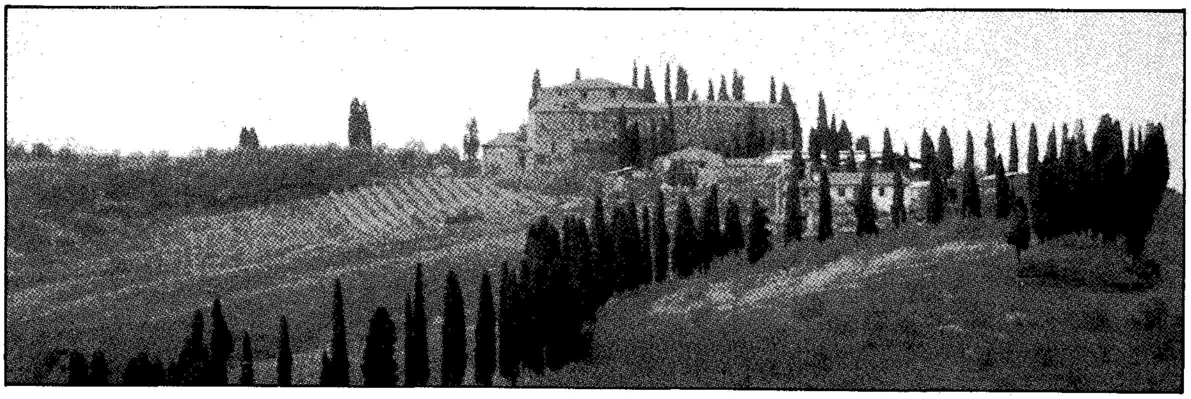

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

A CONSCIENTIOUS CALENDAR OF EVENTS OF INTEREST

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			18	19	20	21
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THE THEATRE

PLAYS AND MUSICALS

As Is—This touching play by William M. Hoffman concerns a personable young homosexual who is afflicted with AIDS, and is also a documentary of sorts about his milieu in this city. The lively, impressionistic performance was directed by Marshall W. Mason, and the acting by the large cast, several of whom appear in multiple roles, is just right. With Jonathan Hogan and Jonathan Hadary. (Reviewed in our issue of 3/25/85.) (Lyceum, 149 W. 45th St. 239-6200. Nightly, except Sundays, at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2.)

Big River—William Hauptman and Roger Miller have drawn an agreeably sentimental musical out of "The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn," and Mark Twain in Heaven has reason to be satisfied with the results. (5/13/85) (Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 246-0220. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)

Biloxi Blues—A further chapter in the life story of Eugene Morris Jerome, a literary stand-in for the author, Neil Simon. The time is 1943, Eugene is in the Army, and his adventures in Biloxi are truly not to be believed. The director, Gene Saks, has worked hard to squeeze the last drop of humor out of this peculiar fruit. (4/8/85) (Neil Simon, 250 W. 52nd St. 757-8646. Nightly, except Sundays, at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2.)

Curse of the Starving Class—A revival of Sam Shepard's brilliant, humorous, passionate play, with a fine performance by Kathy Bates, as the mother of the family under examination. (9/2/85) (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 580-1313. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8, and Sundays at 7:30. Matinées Saturdays at 2:30 and Sundays at 3.)

Dames at Sea—A revival of a musical by Jim Wise (score) and George Haimsohn and Robin Miller (book and lyrics). (Lambs, 130 W. 44th St. 997-1780. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)

Doubles—A number of coarse jokes about Jewish husbands and Jewish wives fill an evening that purports to be about four middle-aged tennis players in Connecticut. Written by David Wiltse and starring Keir Dullea, Cliff Gorman, Robert Reed, and Charles Repole. (5/20/85) (Ritz, 219 W. 48th St. 582-4022. Nightly, except Sundays, at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2.)

The First Night of Pygmalion—A comedy by Richard Huggett. Opens Wednesday, Sept. 18. (South Street Theatre, 424 W. 42nd St. 279-4200. Wednesdays through Saturdays at 8, and Sundays at 7. Matinées Sundays at 3 and Wednesday, Sept. 18, and Saturday, Sept. 28, at 2.)

The Flatbush Faithful—A story of four friends which opens in the mid-forties (at Ebbets Field) and continues into the eighties. The first act is good, but from then on, in vignette after vignette, the play slips away. Gene Nye was both playwright and director. (Judith Anderson, 422 W. 42nd St. 279-4200. Wednesday through Saturday at 8. Matinées Saturday and Sunday at 3. Closes Sunday, Sept. 22.)

I'm Not Rappaport—Herb Gardner's rather synthetic, though often entertaining, comedy about two old men who share a bench in Central Park is given an expert performance by Cleavon Little and Judd Hirsch. (6/17/85) (American Place, 111 W. 46th St. 869-4731. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)

Light Opera of Manhattan—Presenting Lehár's **THE MERRY WIDOW.** (Norman Thomas, 111 E. 33rd St. 532-6180. Saturdays and Sundays at 3:30 and 8.)

Mayor—A musical based on the best-seller of the same name by Edward I. Koch. With a score and lyrics by Charles Strouse and a book by Warren Leight. (Top of the Gate, 160 Bleecker St. 982-9292. Mondays and Wednesdays through Fridays at 8, and Saturdays at 7 and 10. Matinées Sundays at 2:30 and 5:30.)

Negro Ensemble Company—A rather beguiling, if lightweight, farce by the Jamaican playwright Trevor Rhone, **TWO CAN PLAY** is about a middle-aged Jamaican couple. The husband is a blowhard; the wife is put-upon in every way, until she flies to Miami and comes back a changed woman. The first act is too intricate for its own good, but the second act is clear and funny. The actors—Hazel J. Medina and Sullivan H. Walker—couldn't be better. (Theatre Four, 424 W. 55th St. 246-8545. Tuesdays through Fridays at 8; Saturdays at 8:30; and Sundays at 7. Matinées Saturdays at 3 and Sundays at 2:30. Closes Sunday, Sept. 29.)

The Normal Heart—An interminable, trashy, non-play about AIDS, and its victims in the homosexual community of this city, who are compared to the Jews under the Nazis. The names Hitler, Roosevelt, Morgenthau, and, eventually, Mayor Koch are dropped with equal contempt. The evening is an insult to its audience and, what is far more serious, to the sufferers from this dreadful, seemingly hopeless disease. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 598-7150. Nightly, except Mondays, at 8. Matinées Saturdays and Sundays at 3.)

The Odd Couple—Neil Simon has turned his comedy about a pair of ill-matched men into a non-comedy about a pair of women the like of which has never been seen on earth, much less on Riverside Drive. (6/24/85) (Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 239-6200. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)

Orphans—A melodrama, by Lyle Kessler, about two young brothers—one a street thief and pickpocket, the other an apparent dimwit—and an older mobster who takes over their house and their lives. The first act works quite well, the second is merely serviceable, but what really counts is the performance, under the dynamic direction of Gary Sinise. The actors are Kevin Anderson, Terry Kinney, and John Mahoney, and the show is an import from the Steppenwolf Company of Chicago. (5/20/85) (Westside Arts, 407 W. 43rd St. 541-8394. Tuesdays through Fridays at 8, and Saturdays at 7 and 10. Matinées Wednesdays at 2 and Sundays at 3.)

Penn & Teller—A sublime combination of conjuring and comedy. Penn Jillette does the talking; Teller is silent. (5/6/85) (Westside

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Beethoven
Bach
Stravinsky
Wagner
Tchaikovsky

An ovation

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STEUBEN GLASS

Arts, 407 W. 43rd St. 541-8394. Tuesdays through Fridays at 8, and Saturdays at 7 and 10. Matinées Saturdays and Sundays at 3.)

The Search for Signs of Intelligent Life in the Universe—Lily Tomlin in a solo theatre piece written and directed by Jane Wagner. Previews through Wednesday, Sept. 25. Opens officially on Thursday, Sept. 26, at 6:15. (Plymouth, 236 W. 45th St. 239-6200. Tuesdays through Thursdays at 8; Fridays at 7 and 10; and Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays, except Sept. 25, and Saturdays at 2. Special performance Monday, Sept. 23, at 8.)

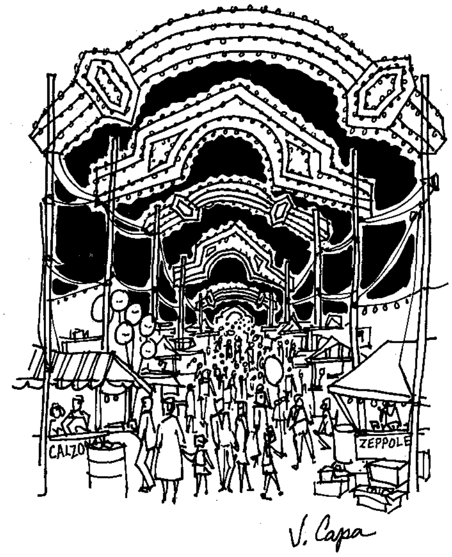
Short Change—A comedy by Geoffrey Gordon. Preview Wednesday, Sept. 18. Opens officially on Thursday, Sept. 19. (Samuel Beckett, 412 W. 42nd St. 594-2826. Wednesdays through Fridays at 8; Saturdays at 7 and 10; and Sundays at 7. Matinées Sundays at 3.)

Singin' in the Rain—What can only be called a watered-down version of the celebrated M-G-M original. The show, directed and choreographed by Twyla Tharp, tries to do too many things at once, with a cast that is hardworking but not very winsome; the absence of the incomparable Gene Kelly becomes a rueful presence. (7/15/85) (Gershwin, 51st St. west of Broadway. 586-6510. Nightly, except Sundays, at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2.)

Song and Dance—A British musical composed by Andrew Lloyd Webber, with lyrics by Don Black, and starring Bernadette Peters. Richard Maltby, Jr., is the director. Opens Wednesday, Sept. 18. (Royale, 242 W. 45th St. 239-6200. Nightly, except Sundays, at 8; opening-night curtain at 6:30. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2; special matinée Thursday, Sept. 19.)

What's a Nice Country Like You . . . Doing in a State Like This?—An updated version of the 1973 satirical revue by the original creators, composer Cary Hoffman and lyricist Ira Gasman. (Actors Playhouse, 100 Seventh Ave. S., at Sheridan Sq. 691-6226. Tuesdays through Fridays at 8; Saturdays at 7 and 10; and Sundays at 7. Matinées Sundays at 3.)

Long Runs—**BRIGHTON BEACH MEMOIRS:** Neil Simon looks back with fondness upon his youth in the gloomy thirties. (46th Street Theatre, 226 W. 46th St. 221-1211. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.) . . . **LA CAGE AUX FOLLES:** A musical with Van Johnson and Walter Charles as a pair of tenderhearted middle-aged lovers presiding over a drag-queen night club in Saint-Tropez; the production is one of the most beautiful—and extravagant—ever to reach Broadway. Jerry Herman wrote the music and lyrics; the book is by Harvey Fierstein. (Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 757-2626. Nightly, except Sundays, at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2.) . . . **CATS:** Some twenty poems about cats by T. S. Eliot, set to music by Andrew Lloyd Webber. A mighty spectacle about mighty little, owing its effectiveness to Trevor Nunn's direction and to the sets and costumes by John Napier. (Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200. Nightly, except Sundays, at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2.) . . . **A CHORUS LINE:** A group of young dancers audition for a handful of chorus jobs in a show not yet in rehearsal, and by the time the evening is over we know everything about all of them. (Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200. Nightly, except Sundays, at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2.) . . . **THE FANTASTICKS:** 10,568 performances so far. (Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838. Tuesdays through Fridays at 8; Saturdays at 7 and 10; and Sundays at 7:30. Matinées Sundays at 3.) . . . **FOOL FOR LOVE:** Sam Shepard's play—mysterious, funny, and beautiful—is about two battling, loving lovers in a motel room at the edge of the Mojave Desert and about many other matters as well. Mr. Shepard directed. (Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-4321. Tuesdays through Fridays at 8; Saturdays at 7 and 9:30; and Sundays at 8. Matinées Sundays at 5. Closes Sunday, Sept. 29.) . . . **THE FOREIGNER:** A very funny play by Larry Shue, with good performances by every single member of the company, most notably by Kevin Geer as a lovable half-wit. Jerry Zaks was the admirable director. (Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St., near Astor Pl. 254-4370. Tuesdays through Fridays at 8; Saturdays at 7 and 10; and Sundays at 7. Matinées Sundays at 3.) . . . **42ND STREET:** A musical based on the old Warner Brothers movie and by no means an improvement on it. Directed and choreographed by the late Gower Champion. (Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.) . . . **LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS:** Taking off from Roger Corman's 1960 horror quickie about a man-eating plant, this exuberant, jokey musical is wholly free of camp. The score is by Alan Menken, and Howard Ashman directed and wrote the book and lyrics. Martin P. Robinson designed the menacing plant. (Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at 8th St. 239-6200. Tuesdays through Fridays at 8, and Saturdays at 7 and 10. Matinées Sundays at 2 and 5.) . . . **OH! CALCUTTA!:** A collection of short sketches that purport to give us a refreshing view of sex and do not. (Edison, 240 W. 47th St. 302-2302. Mondays through Fridays at 8; Saturdays at 7 and 9:30; and Sundays at 7. Matinées Sundays at 3.) . . . **SUNDAY IN THE PARK WITH GEORGE:** A beautiful and often very touching musical by Stephen Sondheim and James Lapine, based on the life (partly imaginary) of Georges Seurat. With Mandy Patinkin and Maryann Plunkett. (Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 239-6200. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)



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MISCELLANY

Forbidden Broadway 1985—A musical satire of Shubert Alley denizens. The lyrics to the song parodies are by Gerard Alessandrini. (Palsson's Upstairs, 158 W. 72nd St. 595-7400. Tuesdays through Thursdays at 8:30; Fridays and Saturdays at 8:30 and 11:30; and Sundays at 8:30.)

DANCE

Trisha Brown Company—A one-week engagement—Wednesday, Sept. 18, and Friday, Sept. 20, at 8, and Sunday, Sept. 22, at 3: "Opal Loop," "Son of Gone Fishin'," and "Set and Reset." . . . ¶ Thursday, Sept. 19, and Saturday, Sept. 21, at 8: "Glacial Decoy," "Accumulation," and "Lateral Pass." (City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 246-8989.)

Rosalind Newman and Dancers—"Heartbeat" (première), "Untitled White," "Free Speech," and "Mirror Lake." (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. Wednesday, Sept. 25, at 7:30; Thursday through Saturday, Sept. 26-28, at 8; and Sunday, Sept. 29, at 2 and 7:30.)

Pat Catterson—Presenting "Please, Just Take It One Life at a Time," a full-length work. (Marymount Manhattan Theatre, 221 E. 71st St. Friday and Saturday, Sept. 20-21, at 8, and Sunday, Sept. 22, at 7. For tickets, call 924-0077.)

Yung Yung Tsuai and Dancers—With guest dancers Armgard Von Bardeleben and Susan Kikuchi and singer Kuang-Yu Fong. (Theatre of the Riverside Church, Riverside Dr. at 120th St. 864-2929. Thursday and Friday, Sept. 26-27, at 8, and Sunday, Sept. 29, at 2.)

NIGHT LIFE

(A highly arbitrary listing, in which bold-face type is used to pick out a few of the more notable performers in town. . . . ¶ Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives that are subject to last-minute change; it is therefore always advisable to call ahead.)

Algonquin Hotel, 59 W. 44th St. (840-6800)—**JULIE WILSON,** a wonderfully convincing singer, concentrates on Gershwin tunes Tuesdays through Saturdays at nine-fifteen and eleven-fifteen in the Oak Room. Dining.

Angry Squire, 216 Seventh Ave., at 23rd St. (242-9066)—A nautical bar and restaurant and music haunt. Wednesday and Thursday, Sept. 18-19, bluesy tenor saxophonist **HAROLD OUSLEY'S** quartet; Friday and Saturday, Sept. 20-21, **SCOTT HAMILTON,** a big-voiced, swing-era-style tenor saxophonist, and his quintet; Sunday, Sept. 22, the Lodi Carr quartet; Tuesday, Sept. 24, the Tom Varner quartet; Wednesday and Thursday, Sept. 25-26, **MAJOR HOLLEY,** the buzzing, bowing bassist; and Friday and Saturday, Sept. 27-28, tenor saxophonist and onetime Mingus-ite **RICKY FORD** and a quartet. Mondays, there are jam sessions with Mark Morganelli. Sets begin Sundays through Thursdays at nine, and Fridays and Saturdays at ten.

Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—Altoist **PHIL WOODS** leads a quintet opposite singer Laurel Massé and her group through Sunday, Sept. 22, and on Monday, Sept. 23, pianist **MONTY ALEXANDER** will come in with a trio. Music from nine. Dining.

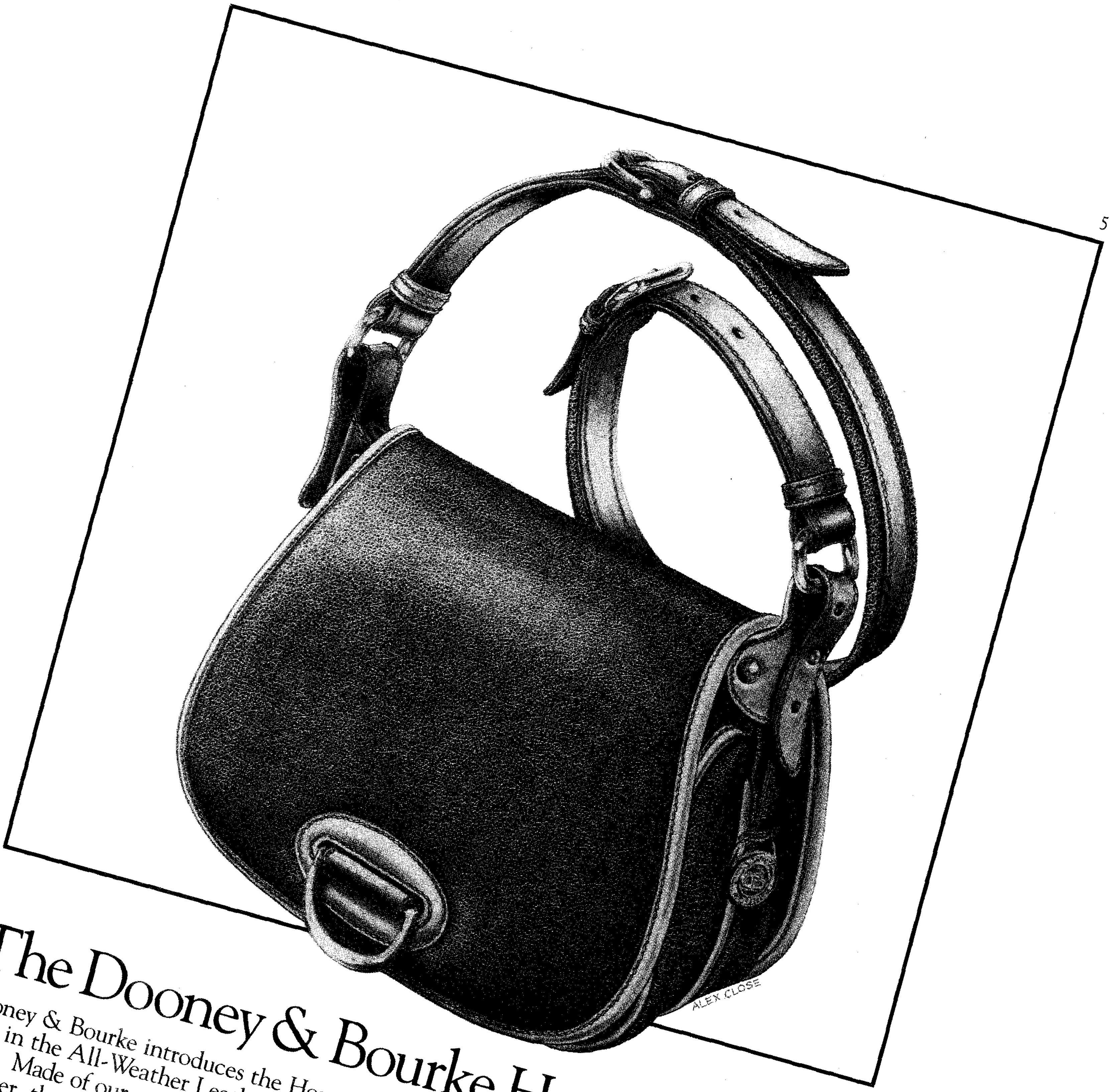
Bottom Line, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—The oh-so-varied lineup: Thursday through Sunday, Sept. 19-22, "Just Once," a musical based on songs by Cynthia Weil and Barry Mann; Thursday and Friday, Sept. 26-27, singer-songwriter **SUZANNE VEGA** and Frank Maya; and Saturday, Sept. 28, hypnotist Sebastian Sinclaire. Shows Sundays through Thursdays at eight and eleven, and Fridays and Saturdays at eight-thirty and eleven-thirty. Dining.

Bradley's, 70 University Pl., at 11th St. (228-6440)—A convivial, dark-panelled, real New York bar with live jazz, in the form of piano-bass and guitar duos. **RAY BRYANT** and **JIMMY ROWSER** work here through Saturday, Sept. 21; **JOHN HICKS, JR.,** and **MICKEY BASS** will play on Sunday, Sept. 22; and on Monday, Sept. 23, guitarists **JIMMY RANEY** and **ATTILA ZOLLER** will take over for a week. Music from nine-forty-five. Dining.

Carlyle Hotel, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—**STEVE ROSS** has moved into the Café Carlyle, a room where couples have been overheard to utter, "Honey, this is our kind of music," and where Mr. Ross sings at the piano Tuesdays through Saturdays at ten and midnight. . . . ¶ And over in the Bemelmans Bar you will find singer and pianist **BARBARA CARROLL** performing from ten Tuesdays through Saturdays.

CBGB & OMFUG, 315 Bowery, at Bleecker St. (982-4052)—Exposed rafters, weathered, splintery wood posts, decrepit neon beer signs, and a general ramshackle feel. All this and rock and roll, too. Monday is showcase night. Shows nightly from long after nine-thirty.

Chinese Tea Room, formerly Carnegie Tavern, 165 W. 56th St. (757-9522)—The polished and concise pianist **ELLIS LARKINS** is back in this room around the corner from Carnegie



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Hall. He plays nightly, except Sundays, from eight to midnight. Dining.

Fat Tuesday's, 190 Third Ave., at 17th St. (533-7902)—Behind a dark, unprepossessing, easy-to-miss front door, down a corridor with industrial-strength corrugated-metal walls (the kind that would tempt any kid with a stick), and down a flight of stairs, there is this snazzy, cozy jazz room. KENNY RANKIN, the pleasant pop-jazz folkie, sings Thursday through Sunday, Sept. 19-22, and on Tuesday, Sept. 24, pianist, singer, and songwriter MOSE ALLISON, who manages to sound simultaneously rural and urbane, will arrive. Mondays are claimed by guitarist and inventor LES PAUL, the Thomas Edison of reverb, who was once known as Rhubarb Red. Sets begin Sundays through Thursdays at nine, and Fridays and Saturdays at eight. Dining.

Folk City, 130 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (254-8449)—Considerably more musical than Tie City or Food City. Wednesday, Sept. 18, Casselberry & Dupree; Thursday, Sept. 19, a songwriters' showcase; Friday and Saturday, Sept. 20-21, a songwriter celebration, with Christine Lavin, Buskin & Batteau, Aztec-Two Step, and others; Sunday, Sept. 22, comedy night; Tuesday, Sept. 24, Eric Bibb, John Gorka, and Shawn Colvin; Wednesday, Sept. 25, the Lyres, the Raunch Hands, and the Dogmatics; Thursday, Sept. 26, the Nightmares and Dumptruck; Friday, Sept. 27, Texas singer-songwriter TOWNES VAN ZANDT and Wendy and Willie Welch; and Saturday, Sept. 28, Frank Christian. Shows are usually at eight-thirty and eleven-thirty.

Gregory's, 1149 First Ave., at 63rd St. (371-2220)—Wednesdays through Saturdays, Alicia Sherman sings with pianist Peter Madsen and bassist Phil Bowler; Sundays, pianist BROOKS KERR sings and solos; Mondays belong to pianist Baba Motta and bassist John Belzaguy; and Tuesdays are reserved for guitarist CHUCK WAYNE'S trio. All these groups begin about ten.

Hanratty's, 1754 Second Ave., at 91st St. (289-3200)—A spiffy bar and back-room restaurant with a piano in it. DAVE MC KENNA, a pumping, swirling time-warp of a pianist—he plays stride with his left hand and bebop with his right—is in charge here until Saturday, Sept. 21, and on Tuesday, Sept. 24, the City Light Orchestra will move in. Sundays, Keith MacDonald owns the keyboard, and on Mondays you can hear DICK HYMAN. Music Sundays through Thursdays from eight-thirty, and Fridays and Saturdays from nine.

Knickerbocker Saloon, 33 University Pl., at 9th St. (228-8490)—A pleasant corner restaurant and bar that is crowded with good listeners listening to pianist JUNIOR MANCE and bassist MARTY RIVERA, who collaborate Tuesdays through Saturdays from about nine-thirty.

Lone Star Café, 61 Fifth Ave., at 13th St. (242-1664)—No, this isn't the Department of Rockabilly at the New School. It's a degentrified Schrafft's where the authentic Texas ambience is more representative of Austin than of Houston or Dallas. The folk, country, blues, and rock: Wednesday, Sept. 18, Denny Laine, Steve Holley, Lindsey Bridgewater, and Joe Hubbard; Thursday, Sept. 19, the soul band WHO IT IS, whose ranks include pianist RICHARD TEE, drummer STEVE GADD, and guitarist CORNELL DUPREE; Friday and Saturday, Sept. 20-21, La Bamba & the Hubcaps; Sunday and Monday, Sept. 22-23, BOBBY BLUE BLAND and the SON SEALS BLUES BAND; Wednesday, Sept. 25, Mark Farner; Thursday, Sept. 26, JOE ELY, a country-rockabillyist from Lubbock, Texas, and the Mindy J. band; Friday, Sept. 27, ROBERT GORDON; and Saturday, Sept. 28, the JAMES COTTON BLUES BAND. Music after nine. Dining.

Michael's Pub, 211 E. 55th St. (758-2272)—KAYE BALLARD, aided by singer-pianist ARTHUR SIEGEL, pays tribute to lyricist E. Y. (Yip) Harburg Tuesdays through Saturdays at nine-thirty and eleven-thirty. On Monday nights from nine-thirty to midnight, Woody Allen usually drops by to play clarinet. Dining. Closed Sundays.

Mikell's, 760 Columbus Ave., at 97th St. (864-8832)—The music scene here is cooler than a Columbus Avenue gelato and the music hotter than a Columbus Avenue taco. The lineup: Wednesday, Sept. 18, ARTHUR RHAMES; Thursday, Sept. 19, Jeff Franzel; Friday and Saturday, Sept. 20-21, drummer STEVE GADD, guitarist CORNELL DUPREE, bassist EDDIE GOMEZ, and pianist RICHARD TEE; Monday, Sept. 23, JUMP STREET; Wednesday and Thursday, Sept. 25-26, ROY AYERS; and Friday and Saturday, Sept. 27-28, pianist MC COY TYNER. Music from about ten until two. Dining.

Rainbow Room, 30 Rockefeller Plaza. (757-9090)—PANAMA FRANCIS & THE SAVOY SULTANS play such uplifting, on-the-mark swing music it's almost impossible not to want to Lindy to it. Music Tuesdays through Thursdays from seven to one; Fridays and Saturdays from eight to two; and Sundays from six to midnight. Dining and dancing.

Ritz, 119 E. 11th St. (254-2800)—Rock from the eighties in a half-century-old ballroom: Wednesday, Sept. 18, LONE JUSTICE; Thursday and Friday, Sept. 19-20, King; Saturday, Sept. 21, Cocteau Twins and the Lucy Show; Monday, Sept. 23, In Pursuit; and Friday, Sept. 27, Slayer and Bad Brains. Shows Mondays through Thursdays at nine, and Fridays and Saturdays at eleven. Dancing.

Seventh Avenue South, 21 Seventh Ave. S., at Leroy St. (242-4694)—Jazz, blues, and sambas upstairs in a simple, basic, music-first club. The lineup: Wednesday, Sept. 18, Brazuca; Thursday, Sept. 19, New Brazil; Friday and Saturday, Sept. 20-21, Batucada; Sunday, Sept. 22, guitarist BARRY FINNERTY; and Friday and Saturday, Sept. 27-28, drummer STEVE GADD'S quartet. Mondays belong to the TOM PIERSON orchestra . Music from nine-thirty.

Sounds of Brazil, 204 Varick St., at W. Houston St. (243-4940)—A great place to listen to Brazilian, Caribbean, and African music—Brazilian-jazz groups, samba bands, reggaeists, and all-percussion ensembles that perform *carnaval* music—and it tends to be swirling, heady, wonderful stuff. Wednesday, Sept. 18, Wilfrido Vargas; Thursday, Sept. 19, RAS MICHAEL & THE ONE VIBRATION reggae band; Friday, Sept. 20, Tabou Combo; Saturday, Sept. 21, MIKATA; Tuesday, Sept. 24, MIKATA, ARTO LINDSAY & THE AMBITIOUS LOVERS, and the Microscopics; Wednesday, Sept. 25, Coupé Coove; Thursday, Sept. 26, the Magnum Band; and Friday and Saturday, Sept. 27-28, LOREMIL MACHADO. Music from ten. Dining. Closed Sundays and Mondays.

Sweet Basil, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—Bebop loyalist, tenor saxophonist, flutist, humorist, and singer—all that and more—JAMES MOODY leads a quartet through Sunday, Sept. 22, and starting Tuesday, Sept. 24, the bassist DAVE HOLLAND will guide a quintet. Mondays are GIL EVANS nights; when his experienced (trumpeter LEW SOLOFF, tenor saxophonist GEORGE ADAMS, HOWARD JOHNSON on baritone sax and tuba, and others) but unjaded BIG BAND, with its unmistakable Evansian blur of instruments, plays Charlie Parker tunes on top of a heavy rock beat, it sounds like bebop march music. Shows from about ten. Dining.

SIDEWALK
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Tramps, 125 E. 15th St. (777-5077)—A simple, basic blues and rock club. On Wednesday and Thursday, Sept. 18-19, Mississippi-blues musician R. L. BURNSIDE will perform; on Wednesday, Sept. 25, KRISTIE ROSE will sing here; and Friday and Saturday, Sept. 27-28, BUSTER POINDEXTER—that's David Johansen when he's wearing a tux—will do R. & B. and torch songs. Music after nine-thirty.

Village Gate, 160 Bleecker St. (475-5120)—Mondays after nine are salsa nights in the barnlike downstairs room. On Sept. 23, LA SONORA PONCEÑA (featuring PAPO LUCA), HILTON RUIZ and his group, and pianist MICHEL CAMILO, the guest jazz soloist, will all be onstage. NINA SIMONE has returned to perform at ten and midnight Fridays and Saturdays, and at ten on Sundays and Tuesday through Thursday, Sept. 24-26. . . . ¶ Meanwhile, out on the Terrace, pianist HILTON RUIZ is present through Sunday, Sept. 22, and starting Wednesday, Sept. 25, FRED HERSCH takes over the piano. Shows after nine-thirty. And, in addition, jazz harpist DAPHNE HELLMAN plays Tuesdays with her combo.

Village Vanguard, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—People from all over the world are attracted to this famous, unpretentious basement establishment, fifty years old this year. HERBIE HANCOCK, RON CARTER, and TONY WILLIAMS are reunited and attracting people through Sunday, Sept. 22, and on Tuesday, Sept. 24, pianist STEVE KUHN will descend the stairs with MR. CARTER and drummer AL FOSTER. Mondays are MEL LEWIS BIG BAND nights. Music after ten.

West End, 2911 Broadway, at 113th St. (666-8750)—Past the steam tables of piping-hot student food (Columbia University is just across Broadway), beyond the pinball machines is a room full of live jazz. Tenor saxophonist and vocalist BIG NICK NICHOLAS leads his quartet through Saturday, Sept. 21; Sunday through Tuesday, Sept. 22-24, vibraharpist Vera Auer is here with her quintet; and starting Wednesday, Sept. 25, the Manny Duran band will be on the stand. Music from about nine.

Zinno, 126 W. 13th St. (924-5182)—A spacious, airy bar connected to a spacious, airy dining room by a spacious, airy passageway with tables and chairs and pianists or guitarists and bassists in it. The music schedule: pianist JANE JARVIS and bassist MILT HINTON through Saturday, Sept. 21; starting Tuesday, Sept. 24, pianist KIRK LIGHTSEY and bassist CECIL MC BEE; Sundays, guitarist GENE BERTONCINI and bassist MICHAEL MOORE; and every Monday, Jim Roberts and Brian Torff. Music weeknights from eight and Sundays from seven.

JAZZ/FOLK/ROCK CONCERTS, PERSONAL APPEARANCES, ETC.

Shirley Bassey—With George Shearing and Don Thompson. (Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. Wednesday, Sept. 18, at 8.)

Heart—With Go West. (Radio City Music Hall, Sixth Ave. at 50th St. 246-4600. Saturday, Sept. 21, at 8.)

James Brown—With Eddie Kendricks and David Ruffin. (Beacon Theatre, Broadway at 74th St. 787-1477. Saturday, Sept. 21, at 8 and midnight.)

Pat Moraz and Bill Bruford—Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 840-2824. Saturday, Sept. 21, at 8.

Danny Rivera—Felt Forum, Madison Square Garden. 564-4400. Sunday, Sept. 22, at 3.

Sting—Radio City Music Hall. Monday through Wednesday, Sept. 23-25, at 8.

Caetano Veloso—Carnegie Hall. Tuesday and Wednesday, Sept. 24-25, at 8.

Irving Plaza—Wednesday, Sept. 18, at 9: Marshall Crenshaw, the Ben Vaughn combo, the Smithereens, the Beau Brummels, and others. . . . ¶ Thursday, Sept. 19, at 8:30: David Johansen, Carolyne Mas, Johnny Copeland, the Vipers, and others. (17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. 477-3728.)

Jazz Center of New York—Friday, Sept. 20: Bryan Carrott quintet. . . . ¶ Saturday, Sept. 21: Fred Houn & the Afro-Asian Music Ensemble. . . . ¶ Friday, Sept. 27: Rory Stuart. (380 Lafayette St. 505-5660. Shows at 9 and 10:30.)

Jazz Cultural Theatre—Friday and Saturday, Sept. 20-21, at 10 and midnight: Jaki Byard & the Apollo Stompers. . . . ¶ Friday and Saturday, Sept. 27-28, at 10, 11:30, and 1: Junior Cook–Bill Hardman quintet. (Eighth Ave. between 28th and 29th Sts. 502-4300.)

Benefit Program—Folksinger Ronnie Gilbert, jazz musicians Sheila Jordan and Harvie Swartz, comedian Steve Ben Israel, and others performing for the benefit of the Volunteer Stroke Rehabilitation Program. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400. Wednesday, Sept. 18, at 8.)

ART

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

Henry Botkin (1896-1983)—Oils, watercolors, and collages dating from the twenties to the forties. Through Nov. 2. (Childs, 956 Madison Ave., at 75th St.)

Niki de Saint Phalle—Large sculptures, cast in polyester and painted with acrylic, of figures from tarot cards; for instance, the Devil, Death, and Temperance. Through Oct. 5. (Gimpel, 1040 Madison Ave., at 79th St.)

Stephanus Heidacker—Ponderous, almost architectural human figures painted in smooth, thick oils by a young German, new to this country. First one-man show in New York. Through Oct. 5. (Schlesinger-Boisanté, 822 Madison Ave., at 69th St.)

Justen Ladda—Works in mixed mediums by an artist who has a quirky perspective on things—Dürer's famous praying hands, for example, are reproduced in a six-and-a-half-foot, three-dimensional sculpture made up of soap-and-detergent boxes, which are artfully pieced together and painted so that one suddenly sees them the way Mr. Ladda does, as hands being washed rather than at prayer. Through Oct. 12. (Willard, 29 E. 72nd St.)

Doug Maguire—Oil landscape paintings. Through Oct. 2. (Perlow, formerly Sachs Art Gallery, 980 Madison Ave., at 76th St.)

David Park (1911-60)—Figurative and still-life works done in oil, gouache, and ink on paper. Through Oct. 26. (Salander-O'Reilly, 22 E. 80th St. Open Mondays.)

Picasso (1881-1973)—Aquatints, linoleum cuts, and etchings. Through Oct. 30. (Silberberg, 16 E. 79th St. Open Mondays.)

Anne Poor—Recent oils and works on paper by an artist who treats utility poles and power lines with the same delicacy and tenderness she lavishes on the petunias, daisies, and field flowers that occupy most of her attention. Through Oct. 5. (Graham, 1014 Madison Ave., at 78th St.)

Fairfield Porter (1907-75)—Paintings reflecting the placid life of the Hamptons in summer, plus a couple of sharply contrasting drawings of hurly-burly in the city. Through Saturday, Sept. 28. (Hirschl & Adler Modern, 851 Madison Ave., at 70th St.)

Gary Wright—Colorful works on paper, based on maps. Through Saturday, Sept. 28. (Urdang, 23 E. 74th St.)

Vladimir Zakrzewski—Squares, circles, and arches appear in series in these abstract paintings and drawings. Through Oct. 5. (Vanderwoude Tananbaum, 24 E. 81st St.)

GALLERIES—57th STREET AREA

Ben-Zion—Approximately thirty-five iron sculptures of semi-abstract animal forms and African tribal masks. Through Saturday, Sept. 28. (Dintenfass, 50 W. 57th St.)

Frederick J. Brown—Expressionistic portraits of historic figures, mostly, some with photographs of the subjects attached to the canvas. Through Oct. 5. (Marlborough, 40 W. 57th St. Open Mondays.)

Roy De Forest—Eight new fanciful paintings filled with the artist's usual set of folkish characters. Also, drawings and a construction. Through Oct. 26. (Frumkin, 50 W. 57th St.)

Alberto Giacometti (1901-66)—Paintings, sculptures, and drawings, eighty-three works in all. Through Nov. 2. (Janis, 110 W. 57th St. Open Mondays.)

Ian Hornak / David Graham—Sixteen landscape paintings extending onto the painted frames that surround them. / Color photographs that capture some peculiar sites in America. Through Oct. 2. (Armstrong, 50 W. 57th St.)

Robert Irwin—Models, drawings, and photographs documenting his environmental projects, plus two gallery installations. Through Oct. 12. (Pace, 32 E. 57th St.)

Thomas Lanigan-Schmidt—New works in his usual vein. Through Saturday, Sept. 28. (Holly Solomon, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. Open Mondays.)

Morris Louis (1912-62)—Thirteen large abstract paintings completed in the last years of the artist's life. Through Saturday, Sept. 28. (Emmerich, 41 E. 57th St.)

Philip Mullen—Abstract paintings. Through Oct. 5. (David Findlay, Jr., 41 E. 57th St. Open Mondays.)

Nina Posnansky—Still-lifes, figures, and cityscapes in acrylics and in watercolor. Through Oct. 5. (Gallery 84, at 30 W. 57th St.)

Rodney Ripps—Large abstract paintings and complementary drawings Through Oct. 19. (Marisa del Re, 41 E. 57th St.)

Fred Sandback—Four string sculptures, plus related drawings by a Minimalist. Through Saturday, Sept. 28. (Marian Goodman, 24 W. 57th St. Open Mondays.)

Bernard Tschumi—Preparatory sketches and drawings by the chief architect of the Parc de la Villette, in Paris. Through Saturday, Sept. 28. (Protetch, 37 W. 57th St.)

Philip Tsiaras and Heinrich Nicolaus—Neo-Expressionistic figures painted on various surfaces, including thin cotton strips and wood panels, done as individual works and in collaboration. Through Oct. 5. (Getler-Saper, 50 W. 57th St.)

Abstract / Issues—A three-part show of abstract paintings by thirty artists, Sean Scully, Clinton Storm, Edda Renouf, Osvaldo Romberg, Susan Laufer, and Julie Gross among them. Through Saturday, Sept. 28. (De Nagy, French, and Oscarsson Hood, all at 41 W. 57th St.)

Group Shows—At the **blum helman**, 20 W. 57th St.: Ceramic works by Mary Heilmann, Janice Tchalenko, and Betty Woodman. Through Oct. 5. . . . **fischbach**, 24 W. 57th St.: Oil paintings and works on paper dealing with dreams and fantasies, in a show of three artists selected by John Bernard Myers. Through Oct. 2. (Open Mondays.) . . . **grueneBaum**, in two locations, 38 E. 57th St. and 415 West Broadway: Paintings and sculptures by Grégoire Müller, Jonathon Silver, Harry Kramer, and others. Through Saturday, Sept. 28. . . . **kennedy**, 40 W. 57th St.: Edward Hopper, Andrew Wyeth, Elie Nadelman, Guy Pène du Bois, and many others are represented in this show of twentieth-century American drawings. Through Oct. 5.

GALLERIES—SoHo

Helene Brandt—Abstract welded-steel sculptures and figurative charcoal-and-pencil drawings. Through Oct 5. (A.I.R., 63 Crosby St.)

Roger Brown—Stylized cityscapes and landscapes, shaped-canvas paintings with neon lights, and other works. Through Oct. 5. (Kind, 136 Greene St.)

Frederick Childs—Paintings of solitary figures cooped up in cheerless quarters. One of them is peeking through a keyhole. First one-man show in New York. Through Oct. 5. (Brown, 100 Greene St.)

Robert Donley—Caricature paintings of city life in New York. Through Oct. 8. (Knowlton, 153 Mercer St.)

Douglas Florian—Abstract oil paintings by an artist who has contributed drawings to this magazine. Through Saturday, Sept. 28. (22 Wooster Gallery. Opens at noon.)

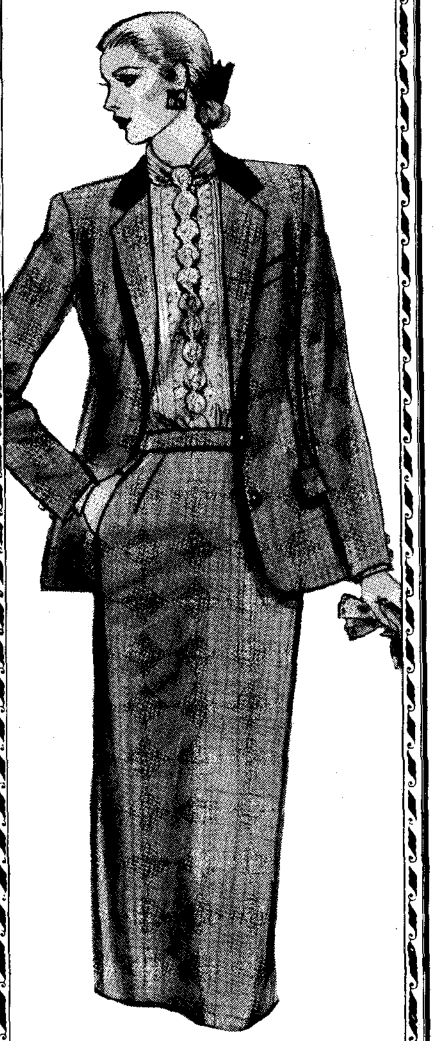
Robert Gober—Sculptures; first one-man show in New York. Through Oct. 12. (Cooper, 155 Wooster St.)

Stevan Jennis—An all-American installation, consisting of three tableaux (an old-fashioned schoolroom is one, and a power station in the California desert another). Through Oct. 5. (Toll, 146 Greene St.)

Ronnie Landfield—Abstract acrylic paintings on paper. Through Saturday, Sept. 28. (Meisel, 141 Prince St.)

Donald Lipski—Sculptural works with a surreal bent—a book with paraffin poured between the pages, a glass-handled pickaxe, and a large shovel wrapped in plaster among them. Through Oct. 12. (Germans van Eck, 420 West Broadway.)

Ron Martin—A series of thickly painted black



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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

canvases. Through Oct. 12. (49th Parallel, 420 West Broadway.)

Lizbeth Mitty—Landscapes of the New York metropolitan area. Through Oct. 9. (Esman, 70 Greene St.)

Avner Moriah—New paintings from a series entitled "Arrests." Through Saturday, Sept. 28. (Szoke, 164 Mercer St. Opens Saturdays at noon.)

Sabina Ott / Ron Nagle—Large diptychs, painted in cold colors and with brisk brushwork, that often juxtapose unlikely pairs—a cello and a whirling galaxy, for instance. / Small, concise ceramic sculptures whose rich glazes are the result of as many as thirty separate firings. Through Saturday, Sept. 28. (Cowles, 420 West Broadway.)

Tom Otterness—Cast-bronze sculptures in which the artist has mechanized forms from nature; for instance, a flower with petals resembling propellers and a snakelike creature with hinges. Through Oct. 5. (Alexander, in a *new location*, at 59 Wooster St.)

Beatrice Riese / Martin Schreiber—Abstract pattern paintings. / Halley's Comet inspired a group of paintings the artist describes as celestial fantasies. Through Sept. 29. (Pleiades, 164 Mercer St. Open Sundays.)

Doug Sanderson—Diptychs and triptychs of monochromatic birch panels. Through Saturday, Sept. 28. (Weber, 142 Greene St.)

Andy Warhol and Jean-Michel Basquiat—Large collage paintings done in collaboration. Through Oct. 19. (Shafrazi, 163 Mercer St.)

John T. Young—Fifteen-foot-high granite slabs held together with steel bars, plus two smaller sculptures. Through Oct. 5. (O.K. Harris, 383 West Broadway.)

Group Shows—At the **ingber,** now at 415 West Broadway: Works on paper by more than seventy artists, all of whom came along in the fifties. Through Oct. 5. . . . **pindar,** 127 Greene St.: Constance McMillan's semi-abstract gouaches and Harriet Kline's hand-cast paper works, which contain shredded U.S. currency, are included in an invitational show. Through Sunday, Sept. 22. (Opens Sunday at 1.) . . . **soho 20,** at 469 Broome St.: Paintings and sculptures by ten women artists, including Expressionistic oil paintings by Elaine Galen, Minimal wood sculptures by Penny Kaplan, and realist landscapes by Shirley Gorelick. Through Saturday, Sept. 21. (Opens at noon.)

OTHER GALLERIES

Charles Hewitt—Paintings and wall reliefs by an artist who counts "Moby Dick" among his influences, and who dwells on ships and fish and the sea. Through Sept. 29. (M-13, at 440 E. 9th St. Opens Wednesdays through Sundays at 1.)

Judith Linhares and David West—Recent paintings by two young artists who are mining more or less the same Expressionist vein. Through Sept. 29. (Mō David, 436 E. 9th St. Opens Wednesdays through Sundays at 1.)

Georgia Marsh—Gouache and watercolor landscapes of the Hudson River and upstate New York. Through Oct. 5. (Stoler, 13 White St.)

PHOTOGRAPHY

Robert Adams—Photographs of suburban America at dusk. Through Oct. 12. (Burden, 20 E. 23rd St. Opens at 1.)

Robert Capa (1913-54) / **Henri Cartier-Bresson**—A retrospective that includes forty Spanish Civil War prints. / Sixty portraits spanning fifty years, Colette, Truman Capote, and Saul Steinberg among them. Through Nov. 10. (International Center of Photography, 1130 Fifth Ave., at 94th St. Tuesdays, noon to 8, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Fridays, noon to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, 11 to 6.)

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Lois Conner—Platinum prints of China, especially the limestone formations in Guilin and Yangshuo. Through Oct. 18. (Pfeifer, 568 Broadway.)

Clarence John Laughlin (1905-85)—More than eighty large-format photographs from the forties, fifties, and sixties. Through Saturday, Sept. 28. (Robert Miller, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St.)

Robert Mapplethorpe—Still-lifes, portraits, and compositions characteristic of this artist are presented in different photographic processes—silver prints, lithographs, large color Polaroids, and photogravures, for example. Through Saturday, Sept. 28. (Gladstone, 152 Wooster St.)

Group Shows—At the **museum of modern art,** 11 W. 53rd St.: Black-and-white prints by four young Americans. For dates and times, see below under "Museums." . . . **pace-macgill,** 11 E. 57th St.: Vintage photographs from the Magnum archives. Through Oct. 12. . . . **schoelkopf,** 50 W. 57th St.: Photographs of the American West from the last half of the nineteenth century. Through Oct. 2. . . . **witkin,** 415 West Broadway: Photographs by seventy-five artists which the gallery's founder, the late Lee D. Witkin, considered his favorites. Through Oct. 26. (Opens Saturdays at noon.) . . . ¶ The Photo Center Gallery, at New York University, 721 Broadway, will have a complementary memorial show for Lee Witkin starting Friday, Sept. 20.

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.—A seventeenth-century imperial Mughal tent is the centerpiece of a wide-ranging exhibition of Indian art, numbering more than three hundred objects of religious and secular derivation. . . . ¶ A display of vases by the Amasis Painter, an Athens potter of the sixth century B.C. who refined both black figures on a sienna-red ground and red figures on a black ground. . . . ¶ Landscapes of the American wilderness and portraits of the Indians who lived there done by Swiss artist Karl Bodmer during an expedition in the early eighteen-thirties. Through Oct. 6. (Open daily except Mondays. Hours: Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Tuesday evenings until 8:45.)

Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St.—A Kurt Schwitters retrospective that includes a comprehensive selection of collages by one of the first artists to use that form. Through Oct. 1. . . . **photography:** A show of more than forty photographs by Zeke Berman, Antonio Mendoza, Judith Ross, and Michael Spano. (Open daily, except Wednesdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 9.)

Guggenheim Museum, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—Paintings and works on paper, primarily from the sixties and seventies, by abstractionist Alfred Jensen. . . . ¶ A show of paintings, sculptures, photographs, and installations by nine emerging American artists. Both shows through Nov. 3. (Open daily except Mondays. Hours: Tuesdays, 11 to 8, with no admission charge from 5 to 8; Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 5.)

Whitney Museum of American Art, Madison Ave. at 75th St.—A show that examines American decorative and industrial design in this century, with examples ranging from a Frank Lloyd Wright dining set never exhibited before to an Apple IIc personal computer. Also, works by such artists as Scott Burton, R. M. Fischer, and Donald Judd, who eschewed careers as industrial designers. Starts Thursday, Sept 19. (Open daily except Mondays. Hours: Tuesdays, 1 to 8, with no admission charge after 6; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 5; Sundays, noon to 6.)

Brooklyn Museum, Eastern Parkway—An exhibition of American Indian pottery of the Southwest. Starts Friday, Sept. 20. (Open daily except Tuesdays. Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays, 11 to 6; Sundays, 1 to 6.)

American Museum of Natural History, Central Park W. at 79th St.—Wood carvings, beaded wood sculptures, and ceremonial masks still used by Cameroon chiefs are among the objects on view from the West African nation. Through Oct. 15. (Open daily. Hours: Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays, 10 to 5:45; Wednesdays, 10 to 9; Fridays and Saturdays, 10 to 9, with no admission charge after 5.)

Cooper-Hewitt Museum, Fifth Ave. at 91st St.—An all-purpose exhibit about wine as a creative stimulant: Chalices, decanters, goblets, and vessels of every kind; wallpaper, prints, textiles, and other decorative objects using grapevine patterns. Also, equipment for harvesting and processing—for instance, a large copper-and-brass still from the Cognac region of France. Through Oct. 13. (Open daily except Mondays. Hours: Tuesdays, 10 to 9, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, noon to 5.)

Morgan Library, 29 E. 36th St.—A show of drawings and watercolors from the Thaw collection, representing such artists as Rembrandt, Mantegna, van Gogh, Degas, and Klee. Also from that collection, a small selection of bronzes, silversmith works, and oil paintings. . . . ¶ An exhibit of English illuminated manuscripts from the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. Both shows through Nov. 10. (Open daily except Mondays. Hours: Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10:30 to 5; Sundays, 1 to 5.)

Museum of American Folk Art, 125 W. 55th St.—An exhibit of sixty paintings by American naïve artists of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, among them Ammi Phillips, Erastus Salisbury Field, and Edward Hicks. From the collection given to the National Gallery of Art by Edgar William and Bernice Chrysler Garbisch. (Open daily except Mondays. Hours: Tuesdays, 10:30 to 8, with no admission charge after 5:30; Wednesdays through Sundays, 10:30 to 5:30.)

Museum of the City of New York, Fifth Ave. at 104th St.—An exhibition of architectural photographs of New York dated 1895-1960 and taken by the Wurts Brothers firm, which specialized in commercial and residential photography. (Open daily except Mondays. Hours: Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, 1 to 5.)

National Academy of Design, 1083 Fifth Ave., at 89th St.—A broad selection of works by Edward Lear, including wildlife drawings and watercolors, oil landscapes, and early editions of his limerick collection "A Book of Non-

Table manners are so revealing.

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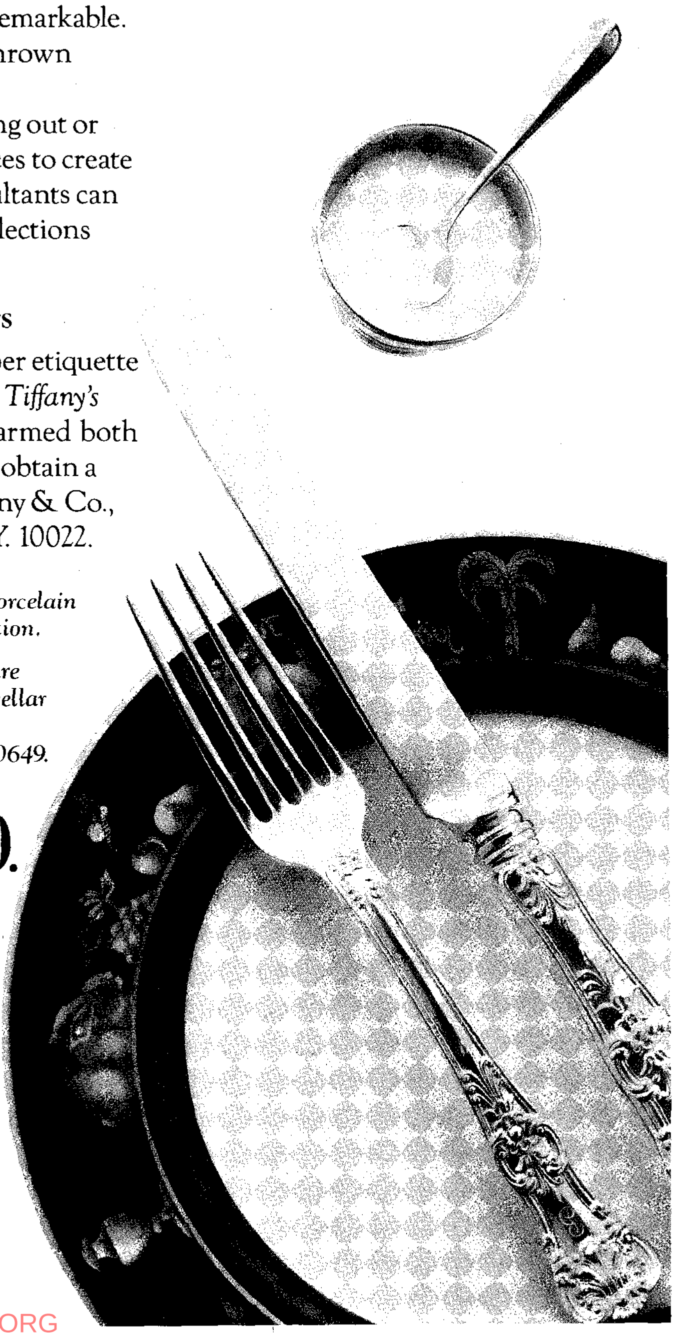

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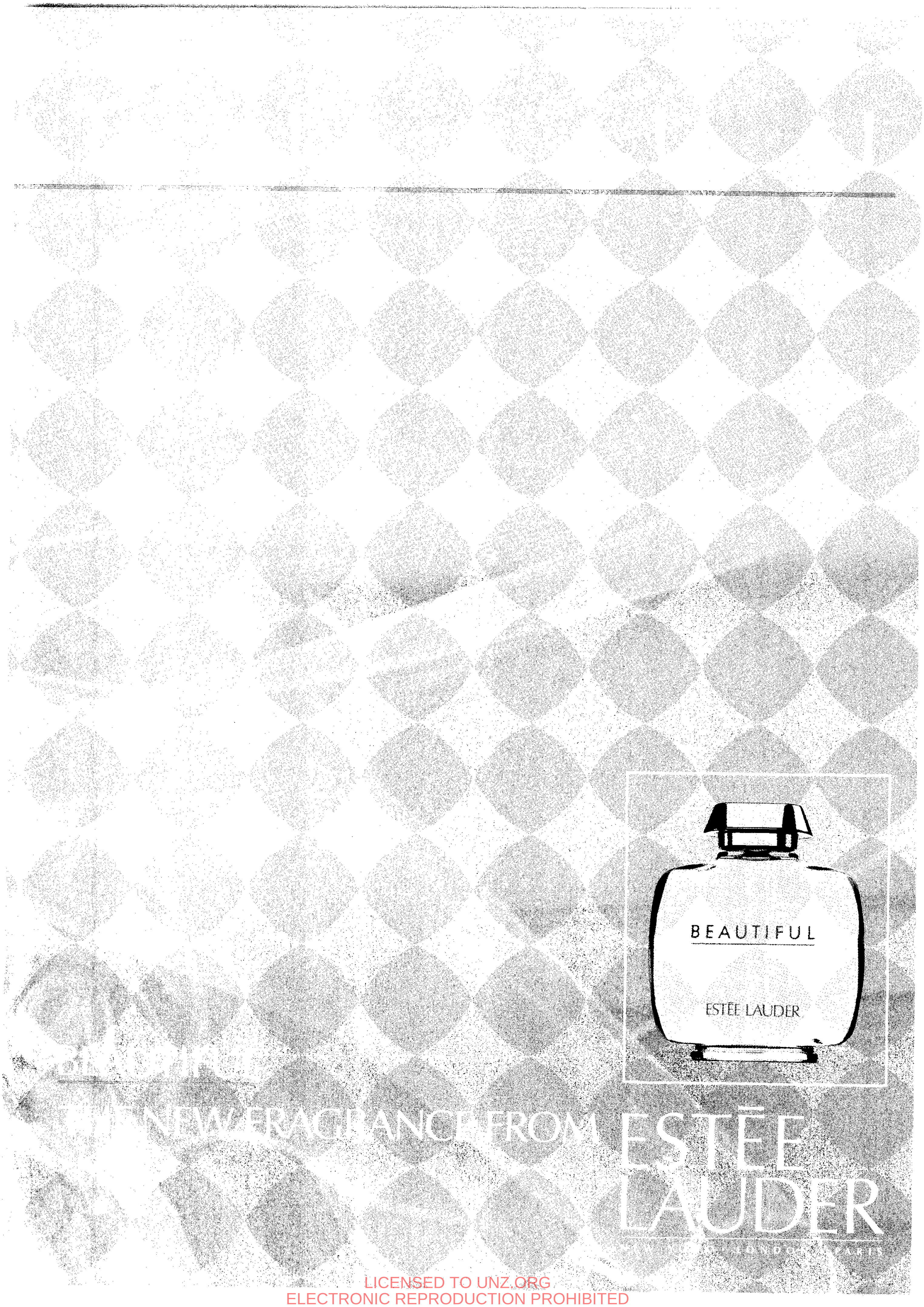
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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

sense." Through Nov. 3. (Open daily except Mondays. Hours: Tuesdays, noon to 8, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Sundays, noon to 5.)

Studio Museum in Harlem, 144 W. 125th St.—A selection of more than fifty twentieth-century works from four private collections brings together paintings and sculptures by Hale Woodruff, Lois Mailou Jones, Henry Tanner, Palmer Hayden, and others. Through Oct. 6. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, 1 to 6.)

ART AFTER DARK

(Performance, music, dance, video, film, and combinations thereof.)

Franklin Furnace, 112 Franklin St. 925-4671—Jo Andres (dance), Thursday, Sept. 26, at 8:30.

P.S. 122, 150 First Ave., at 9th St. 477-5288—Man Act (performance), Thursday through Sunday, Sept. 19-22, at 9; Beth Lapides (performance), Saturday, Sept. 21, at 11; Tim Miller (performance), Monday, Sept. 23, at 9; Karen Pearlman and That Was Fast (dance), Thursday through Sunday, Sept. 26-29, at 9.

MUSIC

(The box-office number for the Metropolitan Opera House is 362-6000; for Avery Fisher Hall 874-2424; for Carnegie Hall 247-7800; and for Merkin Concert Hall, Abraham Goodman House, 129 W. 67th St., 362-8719. Other box-office numbers are included in the listings.)

OPERA

Metropolitan Opera—Opening performances of the season, which will continue through Saturday, May 3—Monday, Sept. 23, at 7:30: "Tosca," with Montserrat Caballé, Luciano Pavarotti, and Cornell MacNeil; conducted by Carlo Felice Cillario. . . . ¶ Tuesday, Sept. 24, at 8: "Jenůfa" (in English), with Roberta Alexander, Mignon Dunn, Timothy Jenkins, and William Lewis; Václav Neumann. . . . ¶ Wednesday, Sept. 25, at 8:30: "Falstaff," with Adriana Maliponte, Gail Dubinbaum, Giuseppe Taddei, and Dalmacio Gonzalez; James Levine. . . . ¶ Thursday, Sept. 26, at 8: "Tosca," with Montserrat Caballé, Luciano Pavarotti, and Cornell MacNeil; Carlo Felice Cillario. . . . ¶ Friday, Sept. 27, at 7:30: "Der Rosenkavalier," with Gwyneth Jones, Tatiana Troyanos, Guenther Reich, and Aage Haugland; James Levine. . . . ¶ Saturday, Sept. 28, at 2: "Jenůfa" (in English), with Roberta Alexander, Mignon Dunn, Timothy Jenkins, and William Lewis; Václav Neumann. . . . ¶ Saturday, Sept. 28, at 8: "Falstaff," with Adriana Maliponte, Gail Dubinbaum, Giuseppe Taddei, and Dalmacio Gonzalez; James Levine.

New York City Opera—Wednesday, Sept. 18, at 8: "The Daughter of the Regiment," with Erie Mills, Muriel Costa-Greenspon, Gran Wilson, and Richard McKee; conducted by Joseph Rescigno. . . . ¶ Friday, Sept. 20, at 8: "La Cenerentola," with Leigh Munro, Susanne Marsee, Joyce Castle, Michael Cousins, and William Parker; Alessandro Siciliani. . . . ¶ Saturday, Sept. 21, at 2: "La Traviata," with Marianna Christos, Mark Thomsen, and William Stone; Imre Pallo. . . . ¶ Saturday, Sept. 21, at 8: "Manon," with Faith Esham, Richard Leech, William Parker, and William Dansby; José Serebrier. . . . ¶ Sunday, Sept. 22, at 1: "The Love for Three Oranges," with Diana Walker, Joyce Castle, Rico Serbo, and Richard McKee; Christopher Keene. . . . ¶ Sunday, Sept. 22, at 7: "The Mikado," with Claudette Peterson, Muriel Costa-Greenspon, Robert Tate, and Richard McKee; David Abell. . . . ¶ Thursday, Sept. 26, at 8: "Carmen," with Margaret Cusack, Victoria Vergara, John Absalom, and Stanley Wexler; Christopher Keene. . . . ¶ Friday, Sept. 27, at 8: "La Traviata," with Marianna Christos, Mark Thomsen, and William Stone; Imre Pallo. . . . ¶ Saturday, Sept. 28, at 2: "The Love for Three Oranges," with Diana Walker, Joyce Castle, Rico Serbo, and Richard McKee; Christopher Keene. . . . ¶ Saturday, Sept. 28, at 8: "La Cenerentola," with Leigh Munro, Susanne Marsee, Joyce Castle, Michael Cousins, and William Parker; Alessandro Siciliani. (New York State Theatre. 870-5570. Through Sunday, Nov. 17.)

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Amato Opera Company—Verdi's "Il Trovatore." (Amato Opera Theatre, 319 Bowery, at 2nd St. 228-8200. Saturdays at 7:30, and Sundays at 2:30.)

ORCHESTRAS

New York Philharmonic—At Avery Fisher Hall, Zubin Mehta conducting—Thursday through Saturday, Sept. 19-21, and Monday, Sept. 23, at 8: A Korngold-Schubert program, with Gary Graffman, piano. . . . ¶ Thursday, Sept. 26, at 8; Friday, Sept. 27, at 2; Saturday, Sept. 28, at 8; and Tuesday, Oct. 1, at 7:30: A varied program, with Nikita Magaloff, piano.

Israel Philharmonic Orchestra—At Carnegie Hall, Leonard Bernstein conducting—Saturday, Sept. 21, at 8: A performance of Mahler's Ninth Symphony. . . . ¶ Sunday, Sept. 22, at 3: A Bernstein-Brahms program, with Ransom Wilson, flute.

Vienna Philharmonic—At Carnegie Hall, Lorin Maazel conducting—Thursday, Sept. 26: A Haydn–Richard Strauss–Beethoven program. . . . ¶ Friday, Sept. 27: A Schubert-Mahler program. . . . ¶ Saturday, Sept. 28: A Mozart-Stravinsky-Brahms program. (Evenings at 8.)

Hunter Symphony—Clayton Westermann conducting a benefit concert, with Emanuel Ax, piano. (Hunter College Auditorium, Park Ave. at 69th St. Thursday, Sept. 26, at 8. For information about tickets, call 772-4085.)

RECITALS

New School Concerts—Betty Jones, soprano; Joseph Porrello, tenor; Frank Wigglesworth, composer-pianist; and other members of the school faculty. (New School, 66 W. 12th St. Thursday, Sept. 19, at 6. No tickets necessary.)

Chelsea Chamber Ensemble—Chamber music. (Carnegie Recital Hall. Friday, Sept. 20, at 8.)

Classic Brass Ensemble—Robert Hall conducting a fifteen-member group, in their first appearance here. (Cathedral of St. John the Divine, Amsterdam Ave. at 112th St. Saturday, Sept. 21, at 7:30. No tickets necessary.)

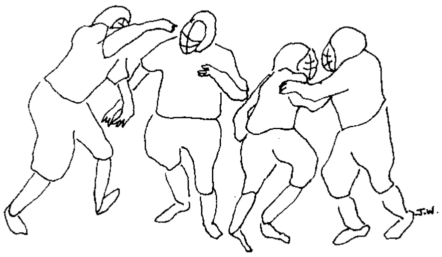
Music from China—Performers from the People's Republic of China presenting traditional, folk, and modern music. (Merkin Concert Hall, Abraham Goodman House. Sunday, Sept. 22, at 3.)

Glenda Maurice—Mezzo-soprano, in a program of art songs. (Alice Tully Hall. 362-1911. Sunday, Sept. 22, at 8.)

Music Before 1800—Among the artists at a tenth-anniversary concert will be Paul O'Dette, lute; Louis Bagger, harpsichord; the New York Cornet and Sacbut Ensemble; and Pomerium Musices. (Corpus Christi Church, 529 W. 121st St. Sunday, Sept. 22, at 9. A pre-concert buffet begins at 6:30; for information about tickets, call 666-0675.)

Zizi Mueller—Flute, in a program of twentieth-century music, with assisting artists. (Merkin Concert Hall, Abraham Goodman House. Sunday, Sept. 22, at 8.)

Frederick Moyer—Piano. (Merkin Concert Hall, Abraham Goodman House. Monday, Sept. 23, at 8.)



Chloe Owen and Mikael Eliasen—Soprano and piano, with Sato Maughalian, flute. (Center for Inter-American Relations, 680 Park Ave. at 68th St. Monday, Sept. 23, at 8. Tickets at the door on the night of the concert.)

New York Woodwind Quintet—The first in a series of three concerts. (Merkin Concert Hall, Abraham Goodman House. Thursday, Sept. 26, at 8.)

Drottningholm Baroque Ensemble—Chamber music, by this group from Sweden, making its first appearance here. (Carnegie Recital Hall. Friday, Sept. 27, at 8.)

Oxana Yablonskaya—Piano. (Kaufmann Concert Hall, 92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 427-4410. Saturday, Sept. 28, at 8.)

Eliza Garth—Piano. (Merkin Concert Hall, Abraham Goodman House. Saturday, Sept. 28, at 8:30.)

MISCELLANY

"Luisa Fernanda"—Performances of a Spanish zarzuela composed by Federico Moreno Torroba. (Repertorio Español, Gramercy Arts Theatre, 138 E. 27th St. 889-2850. Sunday, Sept. 22, at 3; Thursday and Friday, Sept. 26-27, at 8; and Sunday, Sept. 29, at 3. Through Sunday, Dec. 22.)

Tribute to Glenn Gould—Ten programs showing films and videotapes of Mr. Gould in conversation and performance. (Grace Rainey Rogers Auditorium, Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. 570-3949. Thursday, Sept. 26, at 7:30, with guest speakers, including Jaime Laredo and Robert Silverman; Friday, Sept. 27, at 6 and 8; Saturday, Sept. 28, at 1, 3, 6, and 8; and Sunday, Sept. 29, at 3, 6, and 8.)

SPORTS

Baseball—Mets at Shea Stadium: Vs. Chicago, Wednesday and Thursday, Sept. 18-19, at 7:35. . . . ¶ Pittsburgh, Friday, Sept. 20, at 8:05, and Saturday and Sunday, Sept. 21-22, at 1:35. . . . **Yankees** at Yankee Stadium: Vs. Detroit, Tuesday through Thursday, Sept. 24-26, at 8. . . . ¶ Baltimore, Friday, Sept. 27, at 8, and Saturday, Sept. 28, at 2.

Professional Football—Giants vs. St. Louis Cardinals. (Giants Stadium, the Meadowlands. Sunday, Sept. 22, at 1.)

Hockey—Exhibition games—At **Madison Square Garden** (564-4400): Rangers vs. Islanders, Sunday, Sept. 22, at 7:35. . . . **Nassau Coliseum:** Islanders vs. Buffalo Sabres, Saturday, Sept. 28, at 7:05. (Hempstead Turnpike, Uniondale, L.I. 1-516 794-9100.) . . . **Byrne Meadowlands Arena** (1-201 935-3900): Devils vs. Rangers, Wednesday, Sept. 25, at 7:30. . . . ¶ Devils vs. Pittsburgh Penguins, Friday, Sept. 27, at 7:30.

Racing—At **Belmont:** Daily, except Tuesdays, at 1; through Monday, Oct. 21. The Turf Classic Invitational, Saturday, Sept. 21; the Ruffian Handicap, Sunday, Sept. 22; and the Cowdin, Saturday, Sept. 28. (Frequent trains leave Penn Station for the track Mondays and Wednesdays through Fridays between 10:53 and 12:59, and Saturdays and Sundays between 10:58 and 1:04.) . . . **Meadowlands:** Weeknights at 8; through Tuesday, Dec. 31. The Pegasus, Thursday, Sept. 26.

Running—The Fifth Avenue Mile will start at noon on Saturday, Sept. 28, at 82nd Street and finish at 62nd Street.

Trotting—At Yonkers Raceway: Nightly at 8; through Sunday, Nov. 3.

ET ALIA

Walking Tour—A conducted tour of the Chelsea area, sponsored by the Museum of the City of New York. Sunday, Sept. 22, starting at the Chelsea Hotel, 222 W. 23rd St., at 1:30. (For information about tickets, call 534-1672.)

Auctions—At Sotheby's, York Ave. at 72nd St.—Friday and Saturday, Sept. 20-21, at 10:15 and 2: Indian, Tibetan, and Southeast Asian art, together with Indian miniatures. (Exhibition hours: Wednesday, Sept. 18, from 10 to 5; and Thursday, Sept. 19, from 10 to 3.)

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

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FILMS ACCOMPANIED BY A DAGGER ARE DESCRIBED IN THE "IN BRIEF" SECTION, STARTING ON PAGE 20.

EAST SIDE

Little Theatre, Public Theatre, 425 Lafayette St. (598-7171; theatre opens in the late afternoon and is closed Mondays.)
Through Sept. 19: "Vengeance Is Mine" (1979; directed by Shohei Imamura; in Japanese).
From Sept. 20: "Queen Kelly" (1929; Erich von Stroheim), with Gloria Swanson.

New Gramercy, Lexington at 23rd. (475-1660)
Through Sept. 19: "Key Exchange" (Barnet Kellman), with Brooke Adams and Ben Masters.
From Sept. 20: To be announced.

Bay Cinema, 2nd Ave. at 32nd. (679-0160)
"Silverado" (†).

Murray Hill, 160 E. 34th. (685-7652)
Sept. 18: "Pee-Wee's Big Adventure" (Tim Burton), with Pee-Wee Herman.
From Sept. 19: "Plenty" (Fred Schepisi), with Meryl Streep.

Loews 34th Street Showplace, 238 E. 34th. (532-5544)
Theatre 1: Through Sept. 19: "Year of the Dragon" (†). From Sept. 20: "Creator" (Ivan Passer), with Peter O'Toole and Mariel Hemingway.
Theatre 2: "Back to the Future" (†).
Theatre 3: "Compromising Positions" (†).

34th St. East, 241 E. 34th. (683-0255)
"Volunteers" (Nicholas Meyer), with Tom Hanks and John Candy.

Eastside Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 55th. (755-3020)
Through Sept. 19: "Key Exchange" (Barnet Kellman), with Brooke Adams and Ben Masters.
From Sept. 20: "Teen Wolf" (Rod Daniel), with Michael J. Fox.

Sutton, 3rd Ave. at 57th. (759-1411)
"After Hours" (†).

Gotham Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 58th. (759-2262)
"Cocoon" (†).

Plaza, 42 E. 58th. (355-3320)
Through Sept. 19: "Insignificance" (Nicolas Roeg), with Gary Busey and Tony Curtis.
From Sept. 20: "Joshua Then and Now" (Ted Kotcheff), with James Woods.

Manhattan I and 2, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (935-6420)
Theatre 1: Through Sept. 19: "When Nature Calls." From Sept. 20: "The Emerald Forest" (†).
Theatre 2: "Pee-Wee's Big Adventure" (Tim Burton), with Pee-Wee Herman.

Baronet and Coronet, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (355-1663)
Theatre 1: "Agnes of God" (Norman Jewison), with Jane Fonda, Anne Bancroft, and Meg Tilly.
Theatre 2: "L'Addition" (Denis Amar; in French), with Richard Berry. (No performances on Thursday, Sept. 26.)

D. W. Griffith, 235 E. 59th. (759-4630)
Through Sept. 19: "The Emerald Forest" (†).
From Sept. 20: "Kiss of the Spider Woman" (†).

Cinema I and II, 3rd Ave. at 60th. (753-6022/0774)
Theatre 1: Through Sept. 19: "Kiss of the Spider Woman" (†). From Sept. 20: "Mishima: A Life in Four Chapters" (Paul Schrader), with Ken Ogata.
Theatre 2: "James Joyce's Women" (Michel Pearce), with Fionnula Flanagan.

Gemini I and 2, 2nd Ave. at 64th. (832-1670)
Theatre 1: "Sudden Death" (Sig Shore).
Theatre 2: "Volunteers" (Nicholas Meyer), with Tom Hanks and John Candy.

Beekman, 2nd Ave. at 66th. (737-2622)
Sept. 18: "American Flyers" (John Badham), with Kevin Costner and David Grant.
From Sept. 19: "Plenty" (Fred Schepisi), with Meryl Streep.

Loews New York Twin I and 2, 2nd Ave. at 67th. (744-7339)
Theatre 1: "Back to the Future" (†).
Theatre 2: Through Sept. 19: "Teen Wolf" (Rod Daniel), with Michael J. Fox. From Sept. 20: "Creator" (Ivan Passer), with Peter O'Toole and Mariel Hemingway.

68th St. Playhouse, 3rd Ave. at 68th. (734-0302)
"The Gods Must Be Crazy" (1979; Jamie Uys).

Loews Tower East, 3rd Ave. at 71st. (879-1313)
"Compromising Positions" (†).

U. A. East, 1st Ave. at 85th. (249-5100)
Through Sept. 19: "Volunteers" (Nicholas Meyer), with Tom Hanks and John Candy.
From Sept. 20: "Teen Wolf" (Rod Daniel), with Michael J. Fox.

Loews Orpheum I and 2, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (289-4607)
Theatre 1: "Year of the Dragon" (†).
Theatre 2: Through Sept. 19: "Godzilla 1985." From Sept. 20: "Creature."

86th St. East, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (249-1144)
Through Sept. 19: "St. Elmo's Fire" (Joel Schumacher), with Emilio Estevez and Rob Lowe.
From Sept. 20: To be announced.

R.K.O. Century 86th St. Twin, Lexington at 86th. (289-8900)
Theatre 1: "Sudden Death" (Sig Shore).
Theatre 2: Through Sept. 19: "When Nature Calls." From Sept. 20: "Streetwalkin' " (Joan Freeman).

WEST SIDE

Film Forum I and 2, 57 Watts St. (431-1590; Mondays through Fridays, theatre opens in the late afternoon.)
Theatre 1: Through Sept. 24: "Bastille" (1984; directed by Rudolf van den Berg; in Dutch and French). From Sept. 25: "The Tokyo Trial" (1983; Masaki Kobayashi), a four-and-a-half-hour documentary.
Theatre 2: Through Sept. 19: "Eureka" (Nicolas Roeg), with Gene Hackman and Theresa Russell. From Sept. 20: "A Matter of Struggle" (Joan Harvey), a documentary.

Waverly I and 2, 6th Ave. at 3rd. (929-8037)
Theatre 1: "Teen Wolf" (Rod Daniel), with Michael J. Fox.
Theatre 2: "Volunteers" (Nicholas Meyer), with Tom Hanks and John Candy.

R.K.O. Art Greenwich Twin, Greenwich Ave. at 12th. (929-3350)
Theatre 1: Through Sept. 19: "When Nature Calls." From Sept. 20: "Kiss of the Spider Woman" (†).
Theatre 2: Through Sept. 19: "Prizzi's Honor" (†). From Sept. 20: "After Hours" (†).

Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th. (255-8800)
Theatre 1: Through Sept. 19: "Les Compères" (1984; Francis Véber; in French), with Gérard Depardieu and Pierre Richard. From Sept. 20: "Goyokin" (1969; Hideo Gosha; in Japanese).
Theatre 2: "The Shooting Party" (†).
Theatre 3: "Wetherby" (David Hare), with Vanessa Redgrave.
Theatre 4: Through Sept. 19: "The Coca-Cola Kid" (Dusan Makavejev), with Eric Roberts. From Sept. 20: "Insignificance" (Nicolas Roeg), with Gary Busey and Tony Curtis.

23rd St. West Triplex, 333 W. 23rd. (989-0060)
Theatre 1: "The Emerald Forest" (†).
Theatre 2: "Cocoon" (†).
Theatre 3: "Silverado" (†).

Guild, 33 W. 50th. (757-2406)
"Agnes of God" (Norman Jewison), with Jane Fonda, Anne Bancroft, and Meg Tilly.

Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th. (765-7600)
"Ghostbusters" (†).

Festival, 6 W. 57th. (757-2715)
"War and Love" (Moshe Mizrachi). No performances on Thursday, Sept. 26.

57th St. Playhouse, 110 W. 57th. (581-7360)
"Breaker Morant" (1980; Bruce Beresford; an Australian film), with Edward Woodward; and "My Brilliant Career" (†).

Paris, 4 W. 58th. (688-2013)
"Dance with a Stranger" (†).

Cinema 3, 2 W. 59th. (752-5959)
"Prizzi's Honor" (†).

Loews Paramount, B'way at 61st. (247-5070)
"Compromising Positions" (†).

Lincoln Plaza I, 2, and 3, B'way at 63rd. (757-2280)
Theatre 1: Through Sept. 19: "Détective" (Jean-Luc Godard; in French), with Nathalie Baye, Claude Brasseur, Johnny Hallyday, and Jean-Pierre Léaud. From Sept. 20: "Kiss of the Spider Woman" (†).
Theatre 2: "Dim Sum: A Little Bit of Heart" (Wayne Wang).
Theatre 3: Through Sept. 19: "Wetherby" (David Hare), with Vanessa Redgrave. From Sept. 20: "Détective."

Cinema Studio I and 2, B'way at 66th. (877-4040)
Theatre 1: "Crossover Dreams" (Leon Ichaso), with Ruben Blades.
Theatre 2: Through Sept. 19: "Prizzi's Honor" (†). From Sept. 20: "Sheer Madness" (Margarethe von Trotta; in German), with Hanna Schygulla and Angela Winkler.

Embassy 72nd St. I and 2, B'way at 72nd. (724-6745)
Theatre 1: "La Chèvre" (Francis Véber; in French), with Gérard Depardieu and Pierre Richard.
Theatre 2: "My Other Husband" (Georges Lautner; in French), with Miou-Miou, Roger Hanin, and Eddy Mitchell.

Loews 84th Street Sixplex, B'way at 84th. (877-3600)
Theatre 1: Through Sept. 19: "Key Exchange" (Barnet Kellman), with Brooke Adams and Ben Masters. From Sept. 20: "Creator" (Ivan Passer), with Peter O'Toole and Mariel Hemingway.
Theatre 2: "Back to the Future" (†).
Theatre 3: "Compromising Positions" (†).
Theatre 4: Sept. 18: "Teen Wolf" (Rod Daniel), with Michael J. Fox. From Sept. 19: "Plenty" (Fred Schepisi), with Meryl Streep.
Theatre 5: Through Sept. 19: "Year of the Dragon" (†). From Sept. 20: "After Hours" (†).
Theatre 6: "Pee-Wee's Big Adventure" (Tim Burton), with Pee-Wee Herman.

Metro Cinema, B'way at 99th. (222-1200)
"Amadeus" (†).

Olympia Quad, B'way at 107th. (865-8128)
Theatre 1: Through Sept. 19: "Year of the Dragon" (†). From Sept. 20: "Streetwalkin' " (Joan Freeman).
Theatre 2: Through Sept. 19: "American Ninja" (Sam Firstenberg), with Michael Dudikoff. From Sept. 20: "Creature."
Theatre 3: Through Sept. 19: "Sudden Death" (Sig Shore). From Sept. 20: "Mad Max Beyond Thunderdome" (George Miller and George Ogilvie; an Australian film), with Mel Gibson.
Theatre 4: Through Sept. 19: "When Nature Calls." From Sept. 20: "Rambo: First Blood Part II" (†).

TIMES SQUARE AREA

Criterion Theatres, B'way at 44th. (354-0900)
Theatre 1: Through Sept. 19: "National

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NEIMAN-MARCUS

Lampoon's European Vacation" (directed by Amy Heckerling), with Chevy Chase. From Sept. 20: "After Hours" (†).

Theatre 2: "Cocoon" (†).

Theatre 3: "Gremlins" (†).

Theatre 4: Through Sept. 19: "When Nature Calls." From Sept. 20: "Mad Max Beyond Thunderdome" (George Miller and George Ogilvie; an Australian film), with Mel Gibson.

Theatre 5: "Rambo: First Blood Part II" (†).

Theatre 6: Through Sept. 19: "Weird Science" (John Hughes), with Anthony Michael Hall. From Sept. 20: "Teen Wolf" (Rod Daniel), with Michael J. Fox.

Embassy 1, B'way at 46th. (757-2408)
"Fright Night" (Tom Holland), with Chris Sarandon.

Embassy 2, 3, and 4, B'way at 47th. (730-7262)

Theatre 2: "Silverado" (†).

Theatre 3: "The Emerald Forest" (†).

Theatre 4: "Volunteers" (Nicholas Meyer), with Tom Hanks and John Candy.

Loews Astor Plaza, B'way at 44th. (869-8340)
"Year of the Dragon" (†).

Loews State 1 and 2, B'way at 45th. (575-5060)

Theatre 1: "Back to the Future" (†).

Theatre 2: Through Sept. 19: "Teen Wolf" (Rod Daniel), with Michael J. Fox. From Sept. 20: "Creator" (Ivan Passer), with Peter O'Toole and Mariel Hemingway.

Movieland, B'way at 47th. (757-8320)
"The Return of the Living Dead" (Dan O'Bannon), with Clu Gulager.

New Embassy 49th Street, Seventh Ave. at 49th. (757-7003)

Through Sept. 22: "Ruthless Romance."

Sept. 23-24: Theatre closed.

From Sept. 25: "Summer Rental" (Carl Reiner), with John Candy and Richard Crenna.

R.K.O. Century National Twin, B'way at 44th. (869-0950)

Theatre 1: Through Sept. 19: "Godzilla 1985." From Sept. 20: "Creature."

Theatre 2: "Pee-Wee's Big Adventure" (Tim Burton), with Pee-Wee Herman.

R.K.O. Century Warner Twin, B'way at 47th. (975-8369)

Theatre 1: Through Sept. 19: "Creepers" (Dario Argento), with Jennifer Connelly. From Sept. 20: "Streetwalkin' " (Joan Freeman).

Theatre 2: "The Protector" (James Glickenhaus), with Jackie Chan.

U. A. Twin 1 and 2, B'way at 49th. (247-1635)

Theatre 1: "American Ninja" (Sam Firstenberg), with Michael Dudikoff.

Theatre 2: "Sudden Death" (Sig Shore).

REVIVAL HOUSES

Agee Room, 144 Bleecker St. (674-2560; on Mondays through Fridays, theatre opens in the late afternoon.)
"Kerouac, The Movie" (1985; directed by John Antonelli).

Bleecker St. Cinema, 144 Bleecker St. (674-2560; on Mondays through Fridays, theatre opens in the late afternoon.)

Sept. 18: "Kanal" (1956) and "Ashes and Diamonds" (1958), both films in Polish, directed by Andrzej Wajda.

Sept. 19: "Knife in the Water" (1962; Roman Polanski; in Polish); and "Diabolique" (1955; Henri-Georges Clouzot; in French), with Simone Signoret, Vera Clouzot, and Paul Meurisse.

Sept. 20-21: "Beauty and the Beast" (1946; Jean Cocteau; in French), with Jean Marais, Josette Day, Marcel André, and Michel Auclair; and "Orpheus" (1949; Jean Cocteau; in French), with Jean Marais, Maria Casarès, and François Périer.

Sept. 22-24: "Rebel Without a Cause" (†) and "East of Eden" (†).

Sept. 25: "Giant" (1956; George Stevens), with Elizabeth Taylor, Rock Hudson, James Dean, and Mercedes McCambridge.

Sept. 26-28: "Rebel Without a Cause" (†) and "East of Eden" (†).

Carnegie Hall Cinema, 7th Ave. at 57th. (757-2131)

Sept. 18: "Loves of a Blonde" (1965; Miloš Forman; a Czech film); and "Closely Watched Trains" (1966; Jiří Menzel; a Czech film).

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Sept. 19: "Kwaidan" (1965; Masaki Kobayashi; in Japanese).

Sept. 20-21: "Walkabout" (1971; Nicolas Roeg; an Australian film); and "Gallipoli" (1981; Peter Weir; an Australian film), with Mel Gibson, Mark Lee, and Bill Kerr.

Sept. 22: "Once Upon a Time in the West" (1969; Sergio Leone), with Henry Fonda, Claudia Cardinale, and Jason Robards.

Sept. 23: "The 400 Blows" (1959; François Truffaut; in French), with Jean-Pierre Léaud; and "Small Change" (†).

Sept. 24: "Il Grido" (1957; Michelangelo Antonioni; in Italian), with Steve Cochran, Alida Valli, and Betsy Blair; and "Three Brothers" (†).

Sept. 25: "The Music Room" (†) and "Devi" (†).

Sept. 26: "Sanjuro" (†) and "Harakiri" (†).

Sept. 27-28: "Amarcord" (1974; Federico Fellini; in Italian), with Bruno Zanin; and "The Clowns" (1971; Federico Fellini; in Italian).

Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th. (924-3363)

Through Sept. 19: "Touch of Evil" (1958; Orson Welles), with Welles, Charlton Heston, and Janet Leigh; and "The Lady from Shanghai" (1948; Orson Welles), with Rita Hayworth, Everett Sloane, and Welles.

Sept. 20-21: "The King of Comedy" (1983; Martin Scorsese), with Robert De Niro and Jerry Lewis; and "Stardust Memories" (1980; Woody Allen), with Allen, Charlotte Rampling, Jessica Harper, Marie-Christine Barrault, and Tony Roberts.

Sept. 22: "The Thief of Bagdad" (1940 †); and "Four Feathers" (1939; Zoltán Korda), with Ralph Richardson, John Clements, and C. Aubrey Smith.

Sept. 23-24: "The Bank Dick" (†), "My Little Chickadee" (†), and "Never Give a Sucker an Even Break" (†).

Sept. 25-26: "McCabe & Mrs. Miller" (1971; Robert Altman), with Warren Beatty and Julie Christie; and "Nashville" (†).

Sept. 27-28: "The Road Warrior" (1982; George Miller; an Australian film), with Mel Gibson; and "Mad Max" (1980; George Miller and Mel Gibson; an Australian film), with Gibson.

8th St. Playhouse, 52 W. 8th. (674-6515; Mondays through Fridays, theatre opens in the late afternoon.)

Through Sept. 19: "Sudden Death" (1985; Sig Shore).

From Sept. 20: "Morons from Outer Space" (1985; Mike Hodges).

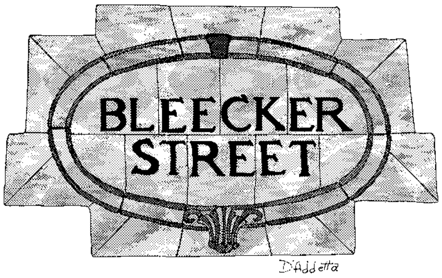
Hollywood Twin Cinema 1, 8th Ave. at 47th. (246-0717)

Sept. 18: "Butterfield 8" (1960; Daniel Mann), with Elizabeth Taylor, Laurence Harvey, Eddie Fisher, and Dina Merrill; and "Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?" (1966; Mike Nichols), with Elizabeth Taylor, Richard Burton, George Segal, and Sandy Dennis.

Sept. 19-21: "Mask" (1985; Peter Bogdanovich), with Cher, Eric Stoltz, and Sam Elliott; and "The Elephant Man" (1980; David Lynch), with Anthony Hopkins and John Hurt.

Sept. 22-23: "Death in Venice" (1971; Luchino Visconti), with Dirk Bogarde; and "The Damned" (1969; Luchino Visconti), with Dirk Bogarde, Ingrid Thulin, and Helmut Berger.

From Sept. 24: To be announced.



Hollywood Twin Cinema 2, 8th Ave. at 47th. (246-0717)

Through Sept. 19: "Desperately Seeking Susan" (1985; Susan Seidelman), with Rosanna Arquette and Madonna; and "Flashdance" (1983; Adrian Lyne), with Jennifer Beals.

Sept. 20-21: "This Is Spinal Tap" (1984; Rob Reiner), with Reiner and Christopher Guest; and "Purple Rain" (1984; Albert Magnoli), with Prince.

Sept. 22: "How the West Was Won" (†).

Sept. 23-24: "Uncommon Valor" (1983; Ted Kotcheff), with Gene Hackman and Fred Ward; and "Missing in Action" (1984; Joseph Zito), with Chuck Norris.

From Sept. 25: To be announced.

Regency, B'way at 67th. (724-3700)

Sept. 18: "Sahara" (1943; Zoltán Korda), with Humphrey Bogart, J. Carrol Naish, and Rex Ingram; and "Passage to Marseille" (1944; Michael Curtiz), with Humphrey Bogart, Michèle Morgan, and Sydney Greenstreet.

Sept. 19-21: "The Barefoot Contessa" (1954; Joseph L. Mankiewicz), with Humphrey Bogart, Ava Gardner, Edmond O'Brien, and Rossano Brazzi; and "Beat the Devil" (1954; John Huston), with Humphrey Bogart, Jennifer Jones, Gina Lollobrigida, Robert Morley, and Peter Lorre.

Sept. 22-23: "The Big Sleep" (1946; Howard Hawks), with Humphrey Bogart, Lauren Bacall, and Martha Vickers; and "Casablanca" (1942; Michael Curtiz), with Humphrey Bogart, Ingrid Bergman, and Claude Rains.

Sept. 24-25: "The Petrified Forest" (1936; Archie Mayo), with Leslie Howard, Bette Davis, and Humphrey Bogart; and "Dead End" (1937; William Wyler), with Sylvia Sidney, Joel McCrea, and Humphrey Bogart.

Sept. 26-28: "The Maltese Falcon" (1941; John Huston), with Mary Astor, Humphrey Bogart, Sydney Greenstreet, Elisha Cook, Jr., and Peter Lorre; and "To Have and Have Not" (1944; Howard Hawks), with Humphrey Bogart, Lauren Bacall, and Walter Brennan.

Thalia, B'way at 95th. (222-3370)

Sept. 18: "Tim" (1981; Michael Pate; an Australian film), with Piper Laurie and Mel Gibson; and "Winter of Our Dreams" (1982; John Duigan; an Australian film), with Bryan Brown and Judy Davis.

Sept. 19: "Viridiana" (1961; Luis Buñuel; in Spanish), with Francisco Rabal and Silvia Pinal; and "El" ("This Strange Passion;" 1952; Luis Buñuel; in Spanish), with Arturo de Cordova.

Sept. 20-21: "Being There" (1979; Hal Ashby), with Peter Sellers, Shirley MacLaine, Melvyn Douglas, and Jack Warden; and "Reuben, Reuben" (1983; Robert Ellis Miller), with Tom Conti.

Sept. 22: "The Passion of Anna" (1970; Ingmar Bergman; in Swedish), with Liv Ullmann, Bibi Andersson, Max von Sydow, and Erland Josephson; and "Shame" (1968; Ingmar Bergman; in Swedish), with Liv Ullmann, Max von Sydow, and Gunnar Björnstrand.

Sept. 23: "Niagara" (†); and "River of No Return" (1954; Otto Preminger), with Robert Mitchum and Marilyn Monroe.

Sept. 24: "Ernesto" (1979; Salvatore Samperi; in Italian), with Martin Halm; and "Drifting" (1984; Amos Guttman; in Hebrew).

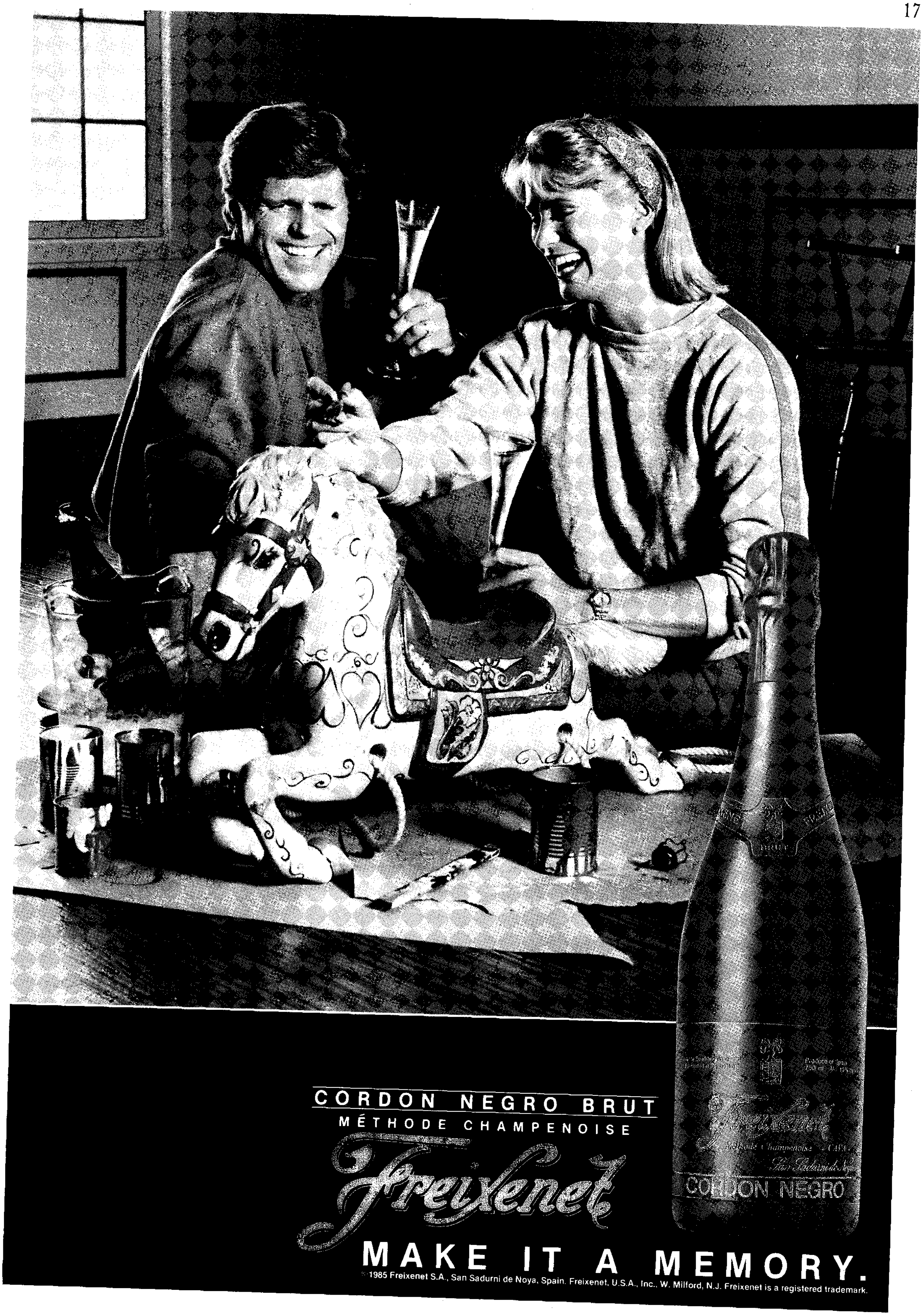
Sept. 25: "His Girl Friday" (1940; Howard Hawks), with Rosalind Russell, Cary Grant, and Ralph Bellamy; and "My Man Godfrey" (1936; Gregory La Cava), with Carole Lombard, William Powell, Mischa Auer, and Alice Brady.

Sept. 26: "The Loved One" (†) and "Lord Love a Duck" (†).

Sept. 27-28: "The Death of Mario Ricci" (1983; Claude Goretta; in French), with Gian Maria Volonte.

Theatre 80 St. Marks, 80 St. Marks Pl. (254-7400)

Sept. 18: "Sunny" (1930; William A. Seiter), with Marilyn Miller; and "Folies-Bergère" (1935; Roy Del Ruth), with Maurice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Chevalier, Merle Oberon, and Ann Sothern.

Sept. 19: "My Favorite Wife" (1940; Garson Kanin), with Irene Dunne, Cary Grant, Gail Patrick, and Randolph Scott; and "Unfaithfully Yours" (1948; Preston Sturges), with Rex Harrison and Linda Darnell.

Sept. 20-21: "The Trial" (1963; Orson Welles), with Anthony Perkins; and "The Third Man" (1950; Carol Reed), with Orson Welles, Joseph Cotten, Alida Valli, and Trevor Howard.

Sept. 22: "Le Jour se Lève" (†); and "Bizarre, Bizarre" (1937; Marcel Carné; in French), with Louis Jouvet, Françoise Rosay, Jean-Louis Barrault, and Michel Simon.

Sept. 23: "General della Rovere" (1959; Roberto Rossellini; in Italian), with Vittorio De Sica; and "Open City" (†).

Sept. 24: "Blonde Crazy" (†); and "Lady Killer" (1934; Roy Del Ruth), with James Cagney.

Sept. 25: "Weekend in Havana" (†) and "That Night in Rio" (†).

Sept. 26: "The Night of the Hunter" (1955; Charles Laughton), with Robert Mitchum, Shelley Winters, and Lillian Gish; and "Home from the Hill" (1960; Vincente Minnelli), with Robert Mitchum, Eleanor Parker, George Hamilton, and George Peppard.

Sept. 27-28: "Murder Ahoy" (1964) and "Murder Most Foul" (1965), both films directed by George Pollock, with Margaret Rutherford as Agatha Christie's Miss Marple.

FILM LIBRARIES, ETC.

Museum of Modern Art, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9490; a limited number of tickets are available to those applying for them in person at the museum after 11 on the day of the showing.)

THEATRE 1: Sept. 19 at 2:30: "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest" (1976; directed by Miloš Forman), with Jack Nicholson and Louise Fletcher. . . . ¶ Sept. 19 at 6: "Female Trouble" (1975; John Waters), with Divine. . . . ¶ Sept. 20 at 2:30: "The Importance of Being Earnest" (1952; Anthony Asquith), with Michael Redgrave. . . . ¶ Sept. 20 at 6: "Richard III" (1955; Laurence Olivier), with Olivier, John Gielgud, Claire Bloom, and Ralph Richardson. . . . ¶ Sept. 21 at 12:30: A program of early Warner Brothers cartoons. . . . ¶ Sept. 21 at 2: "Richard III." . . . ¶ Sept. 21 at 5: "Hobson's Choice" (1954; David Lean), with Charles Laughton, John Mills, and Brenda de Banzie. . . . ¶ Sept. 22 at 12:30: A program of early Warner Brothers cartoons. . . . ¶ Sept. 22 at 2: "Hobson's Choice." . . . ¶ Sept. 22 at 5: "The Importance of Being Earnest." . . . ¶ Sept. 23 at 12:30: A program of 1985 award-winning British television advertising. . . . ¶ Sept. 23 at 6: "The Other Woman" (1961; Mikio Naruse; in Japanese, with English subtitles), with Hideko Takamine. . . . ¶ Sept. 24 at 12:30: A program of 1985 award-winning British television advertising. . . . ¶ Sept. 24 at 6: "Her Lonely Lane" (1962; Mikio Naruse; in Japanese, with English subtitles), with Hideko Takamine. . . . ¶ Sept. 26 at 12:30, 2, 6, and 7:30: A program of 1985 award-winning British television advertising. . . . ¶ Sept. 27 at 2:30: "Notorious" (1946; Alfred Hitchcock), with Cary Grant, Ingrid Bergman, and Claude Rains. . . . ¶ Sept. 27 at 6: "Folies-Bergère" (1935; Roy Del Ruth), with Maurice Chevalier, Merle Oberon, and Ann Sothern. . . . ¶ Sept. 28 at 12:30: A program of Tex Avery cartoons. . . . ¶ Sept. 28 at 2: "When a Woman Ascends the Stairs" (1960; Mikio Naruse; in Japanese, with English subtitles), with Hideko Takamine. . . . ¶ Sept. 28 at 5: "Street Without End" (1934; Mikio Naruse; a Japanese silent film, with English intertitles), with Setsuko Shinobu.

THEATRE 2: Sept. 19 at 3 and 6:30: Two parts of "How Yukong Moved the Mountains" (1972-75; Joris Ivens and Marceline Loridan; with English voice-over), a documentary on the People's Republic of China—"Behind the Scenes at the Peking Circus" and "The Drugstore." . . . ¶ Sept. 20 at 3: "Without Anesthesia" (1979; Andrzej Wajda; in Polish, with English subtitles). . . . ¶ Sept. 20 at 6:30: "La Crabe Tambour" (1977; Pierre Schoendoerffer; in French, with English subtitles), with Jacques Perrin and Jean Rochefort. . . . ¶ Sept. 21 at 2:30: "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest" (1976; Miloš Forman), with Jack Nicholson and Louise Fletcher. . . . ¶ Sept. 21 at 5:30: "Casual Relations" (1973; Mark Rappaport). . . . ¶ Sept. 22 at 2:30: "Heavy Traffic" (1973; Ralph Bakshi). . . . ¶ Sept. 22 at 5:30: "The Honeymoon Killers" (1970; Leonard Kastle), with Shirley Stoler and Tony Lo Bianco. . . . ¶ Sept. 23 at 3: "Monterey Pop" (1968; D. A. Pennebaker). . . . ¶ Sept. 23 at 6:30: "Heavy Traffic." . . . ¶ Sept. 24 at 3: "Casual Relations." . . . ¶ Sept. 24 at 6:30: "The Honeymoon Killers." . . . ¶ Sept. 26 at 3 and 6:30: Two parts of "How Yukong Moved the Mountains"—"The Football Incident" and "An Army Camp." . . . ¶ Sept. 28 at 2:30 and 5:30: One part of "How Yukong Moved the Mountains"—"The Fishing Village."

New York Film Festival—The first programs in a seventeen-day series of international films—At **ALICE TULLY HALL:** Sept. 27 at 7: "Ran" (Akira Kurosawa; France/Japan). . . . **AVERY FISHER HALL:** Sept. 27 at 8:30: "Ran." . . . **ALICE TULLY HALL:** Sept. 28 at 1: "Steaming" (Joseph Losey; Great Britain). . . . ¶ Sept. 28 at 3:30: "Black Narcissus" (1947; Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger; Great Britain). . . . ¶ Sept. 28 at 6: "Huey Long" (Ken Burns; United States). . . . ¶ Sept. 28 at 9: "When Father Was Away on Business" (Emir Kusturica; Yugoslavia). (For information about tickets, call 362-1911.)

IN BRIEF

SEE ABOVE FOR THEATRE ADDRESSES AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS.
IF A MOVIE HAS BEEN REVIEWED IN THESE PAGES DURING THE PAST TWO YEARS, THE DATE OF ITS REVIEW IS GIVEN.

After Hours—With Griffin Dunne and Rosanna Arquette, directed by Martin Scorsese. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Sutton. . . . ¶ R.K.O. Art Greenwich Twin, Loews 84th Street Sixplex, and Criterion Theatres; starting Sept. 20.)

Amadeus (1984)—The lofty playwright Peter Shaffer has the minor composer Salieri (F. Murray Abraham) declaring war on Heaven for gypping him, and determined to ruin the incomparable Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (Tom Hulce) because God's voice is speaking through him. The director, Miloš Forman, trudges through the movie as if every step were a major contribution to art, and he keeps the audience hooked. Some redeeming qualities: Mozart's music, Twyla Tharp's staging of the dances and opera excerpts, and Abraham's eager, slimy Salieri. (Reviewed in our issue of 10/29/84.) (Metro Cinema.)

Back to the Future—Directed by Robert Zemeckis, this piece of Pop Art Americana is a clever, generally engaging screwball comedy. Christopher Lloyd is the small-town crackpot inventor who builds a time machine, and Michael J. Fox is Marty, the seventeen-year-old high-school boy who is hurtled back thirty years to 1955, where his parents are seventeen-year-olds at the same school. The movie has the structure of a comedy classic, but it doesn't have the rambunctiousness or the maniacal edge; the thinking is cramped and conventional. With Lea Thompson and Crispin Glover. (7/29/85) (Loews 34th Street Showplace, Loews New York Twin, Loews 84th Street Sixplex, and Loews State.)

The Bank Dick (1940)—W. C. Fields in one of his rudest. Terrific. (Cinema Village; Sept. 23-24.)

Blonde Crazy (1931)—Minor but high-spirited Warner Brothers musical, with the vivid young James Cagney and Joan Blondell, together with Ray Milland, Louis Calhern, and Guy Kibbee. The songs are undistinguished, but the period flavor is sharp and fresh. Roy Del Ruth directed. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; Sept. 24.)

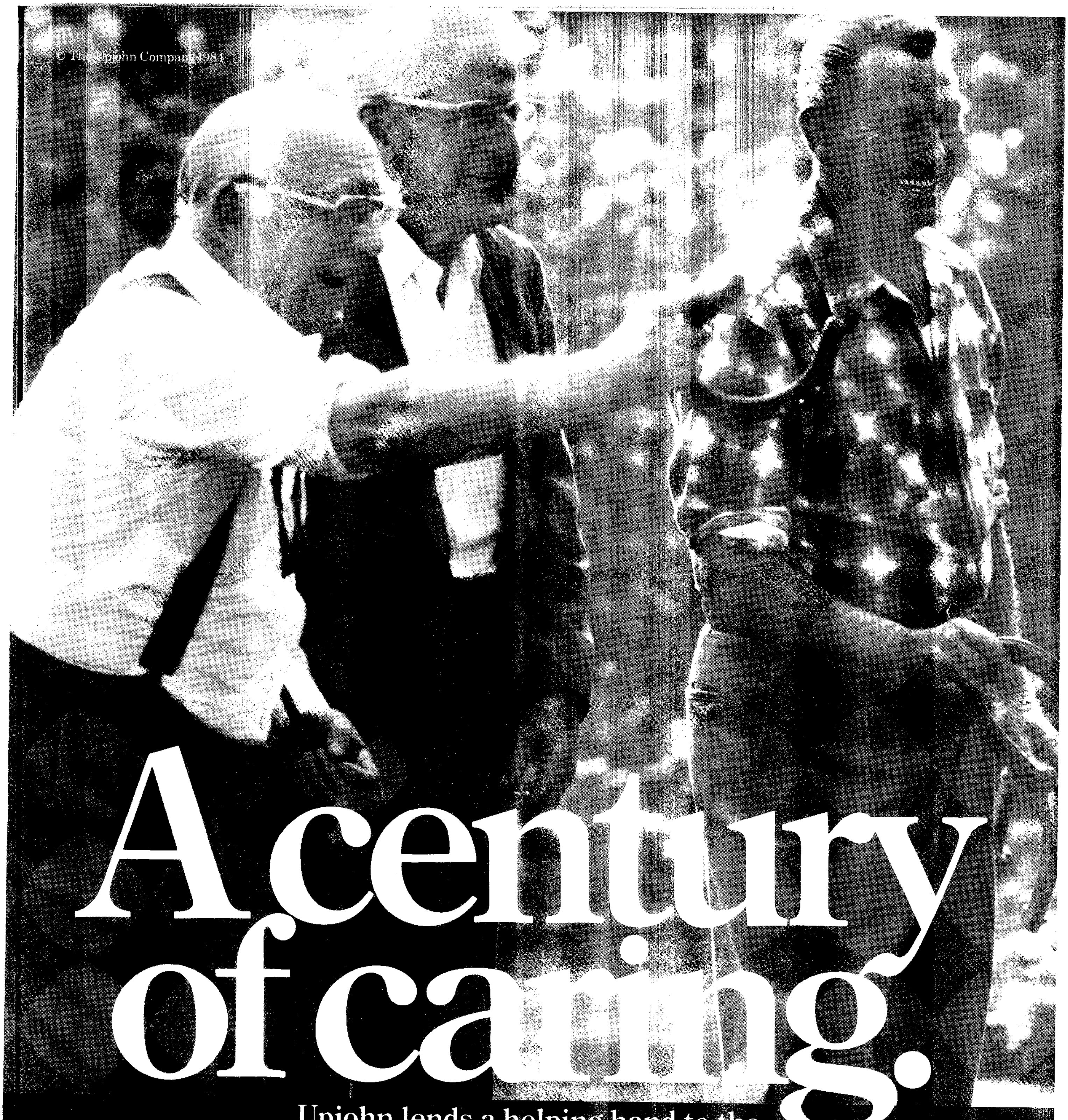
Cocoon—A science-fantasy sitcom, in which the old people from a retirement community go off to the planet Antares, a Shangri-La in space. If audiences enjoy the movie, it's largely because of the elderly actors and the affection that the young director, Ron Howard, shows for them. But Howard keeps trying to extract tender emotions from scenes that could get by only as slapstick, and from scenes that can't get by as anything. The plot is less than ingenious, and things get pretty cloying. With Wilford Brimley, Don Ameche, Hume Cronyn, Jack Gilford, Maureen Stapleton, Gwen Verdon, Jessica Tandy, Herta Ware, Steve Guttenberg, Barret Oliver, and Brian Dennehy. (7/15/85) (Gotham Cinema, 23rd St. West Triplex, and Criterion Theatres.)

Compromising Positions—Susan Isaacs wrote the screenplay, adapted from her likably crafted 1978 detective novel, set on Long Island, and her fresh dialogue rhythms give you a lift. Directed by Frank Perry, the movie provides a batch of actresses with a chance to show some comic verve. Susan Sarandon does some inspired double takes—just letting her beautiful dark eyes pop. She's the heroine, whose unquenchable curiosity saves her from the doldrums of affluence in the suburbs with a lawyer husband; when her smiley-eyed, lecherous dentist (Joe Mantegna) is murdered in his snazzy office, she can't resist poking into the case, because it reveals so much about what has been going on around her which she has been unaware of. (Her spontaneous, impetuous fixation on the murder is charmingly irrational; you can feel that something is bubbling up from way down inside her.) Judith Ivey is in top form as the heroine's best friend and opposite number—a frisky cynic who seems to have been wised up from birth. And Deborah Rush is startlingly poignant as a tarty, uneducated blonde, with scars on her tummy and frightened eyes. The cast includes Raul Julia as the police investigator, Anne De Salvo as the widow, Mary Beth Hurt, Josh Mostel, Joan Allen, and Edward Herrmann, who, as the heroine's husband, starts out as a lively, friendly fellow, and then is turned into her oppressor. That's the plot development that pulls this pleasant, light entertainment down to banality in its second half. Cinematography (with an inexplicable emphasis on ceilings) by Barry Sonnenfeld. (9/9/85) (Loews 34th Street Showplace, Loews Tower East, Loews Paramount, and Loews 84th Street Sixplex.)

Dance with a Stranger—Set in London in 1954 and 1955, and featuring Miranda Richardson as Ruth Ellis, the demi-prostitute who put a few slugs in her weakling young lover (played by Rupert Everett), and was the last woman in England to be sent to the gallows, this English film might be described as kitchen-sink *film noir*. The director, Mike Newell, doesn't give you a minute's relief. The picture is all style—style used to show us the shabbiness of the characters' lives and how they're all trapped, doing what's inevitable. With Ian Holm. (8/26/85) (Paris.)

Devi (1962)—Satyajit Ray's dreamily sensual, ironic film about Indian superstitiousness was originally banned from export until Nehru interceded. The story, about a wealthy man who convinces his son's bride (Sharmila Tagore) that she is an incarnation of the goddess Kali, has startling Freudian undertones. Ray's feeling for the intoxicating beauty within the disintegrating way of life of the nineteenth-century landowning class makes this one of the rare, honest films about decadence. With Soumitra Chatterji and Chhabi Biswas. In Bengali. (Carnegie Hall Cinema; Sept. 25.)

East of Eden (1955)—An amazingly high-strung, feverishly poetic movie about Cain and Abel as American brothers living on a lettuce farm in California in the years just before the First World War. Elia Kazan directed this adaptation of Steinbeck's novel, and it's like seeing a series of teasers: violent moments and charged scenes without much coherence. As the romantic, alienated young hero, James Dean is decorated with all sorts of charming gaucheries; he's sensitive, defenseless, hurt-



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ing. Maybe his father (Raymond Massey) doesn't love him, but the camera does, and we're supposed to. When this Cain strikes his brother (Richard Davalos), the soundtrack amplifies the blow as if worlds were colliding. It's far from a dull movie, but it's certainly a very strange one; it's an enshrinement of the mixed-up kid. With Julie Harris, Burl Ives, Jo Van Fleet, and Albert Dekker. (Bleecker St. Cinema; Sept. 22-24 and Sept. 26-28.)

The Emerald Forest—John Boorman sets his story in Brazil, where the son of an American engineer (played by Powers Boothe) is abducted by an Amazon-rain-forest tribe. For ten years, the father searches for the boy in whatever time he can take off from his job of building a giant dam. When, at last, he locates his seventeen-year-old son (played by the director's son, Charley Boorman), he realizes that the boy's consciousness surpasses his own and that the boy's life is superior to anything civilization has to offer. And soon the father realizes that the dam is destroying the boy's tribe. The faults that have plagued Boorman's films—his lack of interest in character, his rather lordly failure to dramatize the issues that excite him the most, his wacko ear for dialogue—really pile up this time, and he doesn't seem able to get any kind of seductive flow going. With Rui Polonah, Meg Foster, Dira Paes, and Eduardo Conde. (8/12/85) (23rd St. West Triplex, and Embassy. . . . ¶ D. W. Griffith; through Sept. 19. . . . ¶ Manhattan; starting Sept. 20.)

Ghostbusters (1984)—A scare comedy, with Bill Murray, Dan Aykroyd, and Harold Ramis as parapsychologists who try to save New York City from an influx of spooks. Murray is the film's comic mechanism: the more supernatural the situation, the more jaded his reaction. But nobody else has much in the way of material, and since there's almost no give-and-take among the three men, Murray's lines fall on dead air. Playing opposite Murray, Sigourney Weaver is a living zinger; when she stands talking to Murray, she's eye to eye with him and she looks vivid and indestructible. The cast includes Annie Potts, Rick Moranis, Ernie Hudson, William Atherton, and David Margulies. Directed by Ivan Reitman. (6/25/84) (Ziegfeld.)

Gremlins (1984)—The director, Joe Dante, has the sensibility of a freaked-out greeting-card poet. This whimsical pop shocker is set in a sleepy small town at Christmastime. The hero Billy (Zach Galligan), a young bank teller, is given a mogwai—a tiny creature who nests in a box and makes gentle cooing sounds; when the instructions that Billy is given for its care are inadvertently disobeyed, the mogwai multiplies, and its progeny turn into greedy, demonic little gargoyles. The movie never comes together, but Dante is a genuine eccentric talent with a flair for malice. With Frances Lee McCain, Polly Holliday, Phoebe Cates, and Hoyt Axton. The critters were designed by Chris Walas. (6/25/84) (Criterion Theatres.)

Harakiri (1962)—As grisly as the title hints, but a classically beautiful film. Directed by Masaki Kobayashi and probably his masterpiece. In Japanese. (Carnegie Hall Cinema; Sept. 26.)

How the West Was Won (1963)—"How the West Was Lost" would be a more appropriate title for this dud epic, since the pioneers seem to be dim-witted bunglers who can't do anything right. The film is in segments, directed by John Ford, Henry Hathaway, and George Marshall, and the cast includes John Wayne, Gregory Peck, James Stewart, Spencer Tracy, Debbie Reynolds, Eli Wallach, Thelma Ritter, Carroll Baker, Richard Widmark, Karl Malden, Robert Preston, Lee J. Cobb, George Peppard, Raymond Massey, and Henry Fonda. (Hollywood Twin Cinema 2; Sept. 22.)

Le Jour se Lève (1939; "Daybreak")—The director, Marcel Carné, and the writer, Jacques Prévert, collaborated on this justly famous film about a decent sort of man (Jean Gabin) who is forced to become a murderer by the masochistic trickery of the man he kills, played by Jules Berry. Perhaps the finest of the French poetic melodramas, it's a definitive example of sensuous, atmospheric moviemaking. With Arletty and Jacqueline Laurent. In French. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; Sept. 22.)

Kiss of the Spider Woman—Set in a nameless South American country, Hector Babenco's film is about a homosexual window dresser, Molina (William Hurt), and a revolutionary, Valentín (Raul Julia), who share a prison cell. Molina tries to comfort Valentín and help him forget his pain and misery by telling him the stories of old movies. Hurt is just about the only thing to look at; he's very likable in the scenes where Molina reveals his tenderness and warmth and humor. But it's a slack piece of moviemaking, and as sentimental as the forties screen romances that Molina is infatuated with. This Brazilian production, made in English, was shot in São Paulo. (8/26/85) (Cinema I; through Sept. 19. . . . ¶ D. W. Griffith, R.K.O. Art Greenwich Twin, and Lincoln Plaza; starting Sept. 20.)

Lord Love a Duck (1966)—The picture is bright and inventive, but it's also a hate letter to America that selects the easiest, most grotesque targets and keeps screaming at us to enjoy how funny-awful everything is. Finally, we're preached at for our tiny minds and our family spray deodorants. Tuesday Weld has a wonderful blank, childlike quality as a Los Angeles high-school student who lusts after cashmere sweaters and wants everybody to love her. Directed by George Axelrod, with Roddy McDowall, Lola Albright, and Ruth Gordon. (Thalia; Sept. 26.)

The Loved One (1965)—In 1948, Evelyn Waugh wrote "The Loved One," a short satirical novel about one of the last outposts of empire—the British colony in the movie business—and its renegade poet who goes to work in a cemetery for pets. From the look of the film, director Tony Richardson shot every plausible idea that came to him, and then, as the footage had no flow, no development, he chopped it up and slapped it together hard, trying to use overlapping sound to plug up the holes. But it's funny anyway. Although the picture has lost its center, some of the fragments are good and jagged. This botched picture is a triumphant disaster—a sinking ship that makes it to port because everybody on board is too giddy to panic. With Robert Morse, Milton Berle and Margaret Leighton—who are quite amazing together—Rod Steiger, Jonathan Winters, and Liberace. (Thalia; Sept. 26.)

The Music Room (1958)—Satyajit Ray's extraordinary study of pride carried to extremity. A great, flawed, maddening film—hard to take but probably impossible to forget. It's often crude and it's poorly constructed, but it's a great experience. Worrying over its faults is like worrying over whether "King Lear" is well constructed; it doesn't really matter. Ray made this film between the second and third parts of the Apu Trilogy, for respite. With Chabbi Biswas. In Bengali. (Carnegie Hall Cinema; Sept. 25.)

My Brilliant Career (1980)—This strong, consistently rewarding Australian film about the coming of age of a spirited, overintelligent young woman living on a New South Wales cattle station at the turn of the century looks and feels and moves along like a first-class old-fashioned novel. The heroine, Sybylla Melvyn, is beautifully played by the resourceful and striking Judy Davis, and the movie is sustained by a great number of splendidly drawn and well-acted secondary characters, and by the restraint of its director, Gillian Armstrong. With Sam Neill, Pat Kennedy, Peter Whitford, Wendy Hughes, and Aileen Brittain. (57th St. Playhouse.)

My Little Chickadee (1940)—A classic among bad movies: despite the presence of Mae West and W. C. Fields (it's the only time they acted together), this satire of Westerns never really gets off the ground. But the ground is such an honest mixture of dirt, manure, and corn that at times it is fairly aromatic. Mae West is rather slowed down by the censors breathing down her décolletage, but even though she is less bawdy and rather more grotesque than at her best, she is still overwhelming. Fields is in better form: whether cheating at cards, or kissing Mae West's hand ("What symmetrical digits!"), or spending his wedding night with a goat, he remains the scowling, snarling misanthrope. Directed by Edward Cline. (Cinema Village; Sept. 23-24.)

Nashville (1975)—Robert Altman's movie is at once a "Grand Hotel"-style narrative, with twenty-four linked characters; a country-and-Western musical; a documentary essay on Nashville and American life; a meditation on

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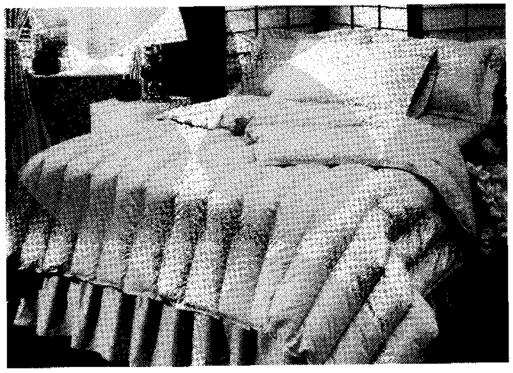

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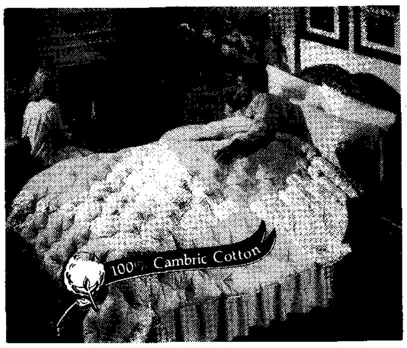

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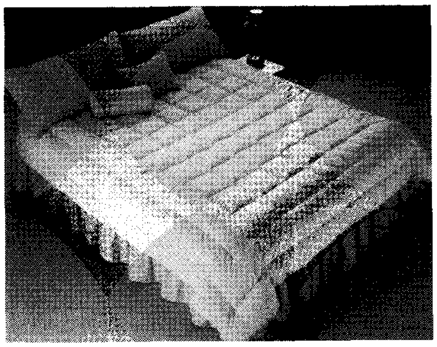

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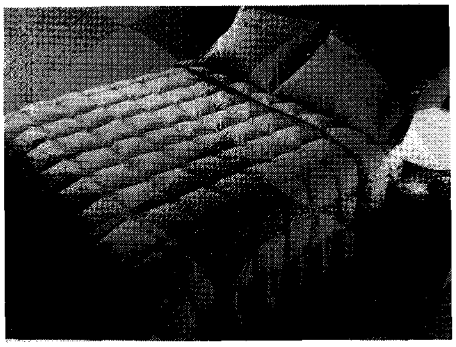

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Never Give a Sucker an Even Break (1941)—W. C. Fields in his prime. Like "The Bank Dick" of the year before, this one deals with making a movie. The movie Fields wants to make is set in a Ruritania in the clouds that is native American surrealism—comic-strip foolishness. Up there, he encounters the great-bosomed comic divinity, Margaret Dumont. The film also has its horror: an erstwhile ingénue named Gloria Jean. You can't just shut your eyes because she *sings*. Edward Cline directed. (Cinema Village; Sept. 23-24.)

Niagara (1953)—This isn't a good movie, but it's fascinatingly tawdry and nasty—the only movie that explored the mean, unsavory potential of Marilyn Monroe's cuddly, infantile perversity. There's no affection for her here. This picture was made just before she won Hollywood over with "Gentlemen Prefer Blondes," and the amoral, destructive tramp—carnal as hell—she plays here must represent Hollywood's lowest estimate of her. Joseph Cotten plays the husband whom she plans to kill; Richard Allan is her lover. With Jean Peters. Henry Hathaway directed. (Thalia; Sept. 23.)

Open City (1945)—Roberto Rossellini burst upon the world with this film, made just after the Allies took Rome. The fame of his brutal, melodramatic account of the underground resistance to the Nazi occupation rests on its extraordinary immediacy and its rough, documentary look; at its most startling, it seems "caught" rather than staged. Many Americans mistook the great Anna Magnani and Aldo Fabrizi, Maria Michi, and the other actors for nonprofessionals—this despite such stock elements as a rapacious lesbian Gestapo agent and a Hollywood-and-Vine-type Gestapo chief. The plot devices are often opportunistic, but there's a unifying fervor; shot on odds and ends of film stock, with fluctuating electricity, and showing people who a few weeks before had been part of the events, the movie gave us a cross-section of a city under terrible stress. In Italian. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; Sept. 23.)

Prizzi's Honor—This John Huston picture has a ripe and daring comic tone. It revels voluptuously in the murderous finagling of the members of a Brooklyn Mafia family, and rejoices in their scams. Jack Nicholson's average-guyness as Charley, the clan's enforcer, is the film's touchstone: this is a baroque comedy about people who behave in ordinary ways in grotesque circumstances. Everything in this picture works with everything else—which is to say that John Huston has it all in the palm of his big, bony hand. With William Hickey, Anjelica Huston, Kathleen Turner, and John Randolph. (7/1/85) (Cinema 3. . . . ¶ R.K.O. Art Greenwich Twin, and Cinema Studio; through Sept. 19.)

Rambo: First Blood Part II—Audiences hoot at it and get a little charged up at the same time. The proceedings are directed by George P. Cosmatos, and he gives the near-psychotic material a veneer of professionalism, but the looniness is always there. The film's star and progenitor is Sylvester Stallone, and the way he's photographed he's huge—our national palooka. This humanoid Christ figure with brown leather skin and symmetrical scars goes into Vietnam and brings out a bunch of our missing-in-action men. With Julia Nickson, Richard Crenna, and Charles Napier. (6/17/85) (Criterion Theatres. . . . ¶ Olympia Quad; starting Sept. 20.)

Rebel Without a Cause (1955)—As Jim, a high-school boy, James Dean was the archetypal misunderstood teen-ager in this generation-gap soap opera of the fifties, which had more emotional resonance for the teen-agers of the time than many much better movies. With Natalie Wood, Sal Mineo, Corey Allen, Nick Adams, Dennis Hopper, Jim Backus, and Ann Doran. Directed by Nicholas Ray. (Bleecker St. Cinema; Sept. 22-24 and Sept. 26-28.)

Sanjuro (1963)—Toshiro Mifune as the fastest sword in the East, in a mocking melodrama directed by Akira Kurosawa. In Japanese. (Carnegie Hall Cinema; Sept. 26.)

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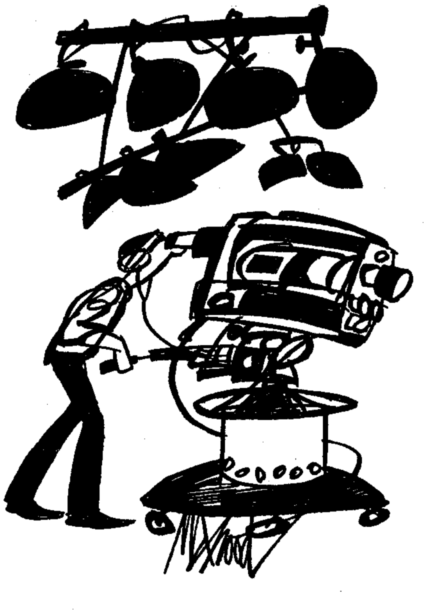
The Shooting Party—Working with Julian Bond's adaptation of Isabel Colegate's novel and a dream of a cast—James Mason (in his final movie), John Gielgud, Dorothy Tutin, Edward Fox, Gordon Jackson, Cheryl Campbell, Judi Bowker, Rupert Frazer, Aharon Ipalé—the director Alan Bridges carries the Masterpiece Theatre approach to the level of art. In the English countryside in the autumn of 1913, a large number of landed gentry, aristocrats, servants, gamekeepers, beaters, and loaders gather for a three-day shoot. Colegate's tone is lightly self-mocking, and the film is full of the English affection for gentle lunacy. This is one of the rare movies that can be said to be for an educated audience without that being a putdown. As the host, an aging baronet who's conscious that he's losing his grip, Mason gives the film its immediacy. (6/17/85) (Quad Cinema.)

Silverado—The director, Lawrence Kasdan, uses accomplished actors: the four heroes journeying west to Silverado in the eighteen-eighties are played by Kevin Kline, Scott Glenn, Kevin Costner, and Danny Glover, and they're variously involved with Linda Hunt, Rosanna Arquette, Brian Dennehy, John Cleese, and Jeff Goldblum. But the atmosphere is arch and uninvolving, and these actors don't seem sure what their characters are meant to be. The film is like a homage to the expensive Western; it's so opulent it has a nouveau-riche aura about it. (7/29/85) (Bay Cinema, 23rd St. West Triplex, and Embassy.)

Small Change (1976)—François Truffaut's series of sketches on the general theme of the resilience of children turns out to be the rarity—a poetic comedy that's really funny. Truffaut's deadpan, disjointed style is quicker and surer than ever before; the kids seem to be photographed in the act of inventing slapstick. There's a serious side (the story of a mistreated boy) that's a failure, and Truffaut's view of childhood innocence has elements of middle-class preciousness, but the jokes make the film worth seeing. In French. (Carnegie Hall Cinema; Sept. 23.)

That Night in Rio (1941)—Alice Faye could dance, and she had a lush contralto voice, but in this low-camp musical her co-star is Don Ameche, the cipher that sings, in a double role. That's twice nothing. The mistaken-identity plot, with the neglected wife falling in love with the night-club entertainer hired to impersonate her husband, is just a farce variation on "The Prisoner of Zenda." The film, directed by Irving Cummings, features the Brazilian Bombshell, Carmen Miranda—it would be a euphemism to describe her as volatile. She plays the entertainer's girlfriend, wears fruit on her head, and sings "I Yi Yi Yi Yi Like You Very Much." With Maria Montez, S. Z. Sakall, and J. Carrol Naish. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; Sept. 25.)



The Thief of Bagdad (1940)—Magical Arabian Nights adventures, on enormous, spacious sets and in brilliantly clear Maxfield Parrish colors; the screen seems to be made of velvet. Sabu is the boy thief who befriends the prince who has been blinded and has had his kingdom usurped by the evil magician, the Grand Vizier Jaffar (Conrad Veidt). The script lacks enchantment; the flashback device at the beginning is unnecessarily complicated, and the dialogue throughout is distressingly ordinary. This adds to the film's other problems—the uneven rhythms and the occasional dead spots, the stagy use of the spectacular sets. Yet considering how many directors took turns on this picture (Ludwig Berger, Michael Powell, and Tim Whelan are all credited, and Zoltán Korda and William Cameron Menzies, who are credited only as associate producers, also directed, as did Alexander Korda), it's surprising how well it holds together. With Rex Ingram, June Duprez, and Miles Malleson. (Cinema Village; Sept. 22.)

Three Brothers (1982)—Three Italian brothers who have immigrated to the cities go back south to their father's farm in the Apulia region for their mother's funeral. It's a wonderful film that moves on waves of feeling. Directed by Francesco Rosi, it's about the violence in the cities, the split between the North and the South, the break between the generations. Yet it's set in the old father's world, where the cycle of nature is what matters. The old man (Charles Vanel, at eighty-nine) has lived his life without ever needing to worry about terrorism, crime, chaos; the sons' thoughts and fantasies all come out of their anxieties. With Philippe Noiret, Vittorio Mezzogiorno, and Michele Placido. In Italian. (Carnegie Hall Cinema; Sept. 24.)

Weekend in Havana (1941)—Probably the cheerfullest weekend in Havana's history, what with Carmen Miranda, Alice Faye, John Payne, Cesar Romero, Leonid Kinskey, George Barbier, and everybody else on the Twentieth Century-Fox lot beaming with fatuous good will. Carmen Miranda wears a headgear of grapefruit, grapes, apples, oranges, bananas, lemons, pineapples, and an occasional small plum. Walter Lang directed. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; Sept. 25.)

Year of the Dragon—Stan White (Mickey Rourke), a New York police captain, is assigned to put a damper on the murderous youth gangs who are disrupting life in Chinatown. But Stan—a synthesis of Rambo and Dirty Harry—can't live with compromise; he starts to create chaos in the community so that (in some unexplained way) he can tear out the roots of crime. The movie is a form of hysterical, rabble-rousing pulp, yet it isn't involving; it doesn't have the propulsion of good pulp storytelling. It's sunk in torpor, and Stan, who seems to be continuing the Vietnam War in Chinatown, has no core; he's all blowhard pose. Loosely derived from the novel by Robert Daley, the tawdry script—it gives the characters a flat, stunted vocabulary of about twenty-five words, most of them the basic four-letter expletives—was written by Oliver ("Midnight Express") Stone and Michael Cimino, who directed. The only performance that has any intensity is the quiet one given by John Lone as the sneaky, new young Chinese Godfather—he's Cimino's Heart of Darkness and Yellow Peril, too. Lone is so fine-drawn and elegant he just about turns the movie upside down; this gangster comes across as the only character with any brains or emotional life. The grating-voiced Ariane, a model of Dutch and Japanese parentage, is the TV-newscaster heroine; she's officious and nostrilly, like an Oriental Ali MacGraw. With Ray Barry, Caroline Kava, Dennis Dun, and Leonard Termo. Parts of Chinatown's Mott Street were re-created in Dino De Laurentiis' new studios in Wilmington, North Carolina. (9/9/85) (Loews Orpheum, and Loews Astor Plaza. . . . ¶ Loews 34th Street Showplace, Loews 84th Street Sixplex, and Olympia Quad; through Sept. 19.)

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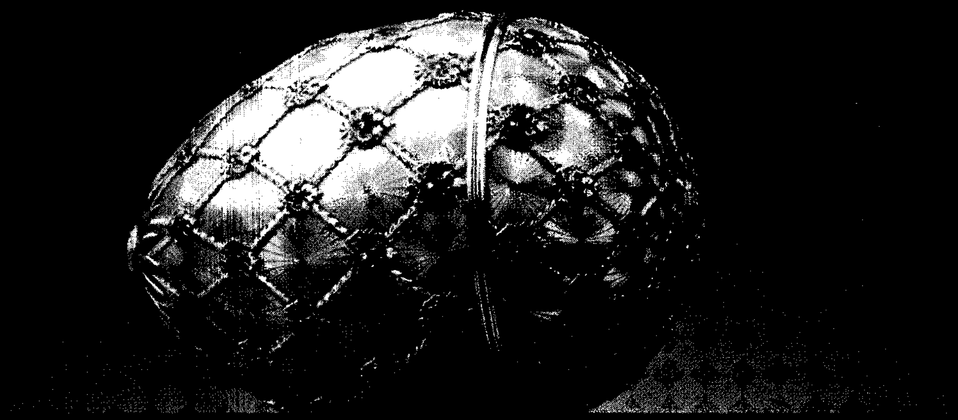

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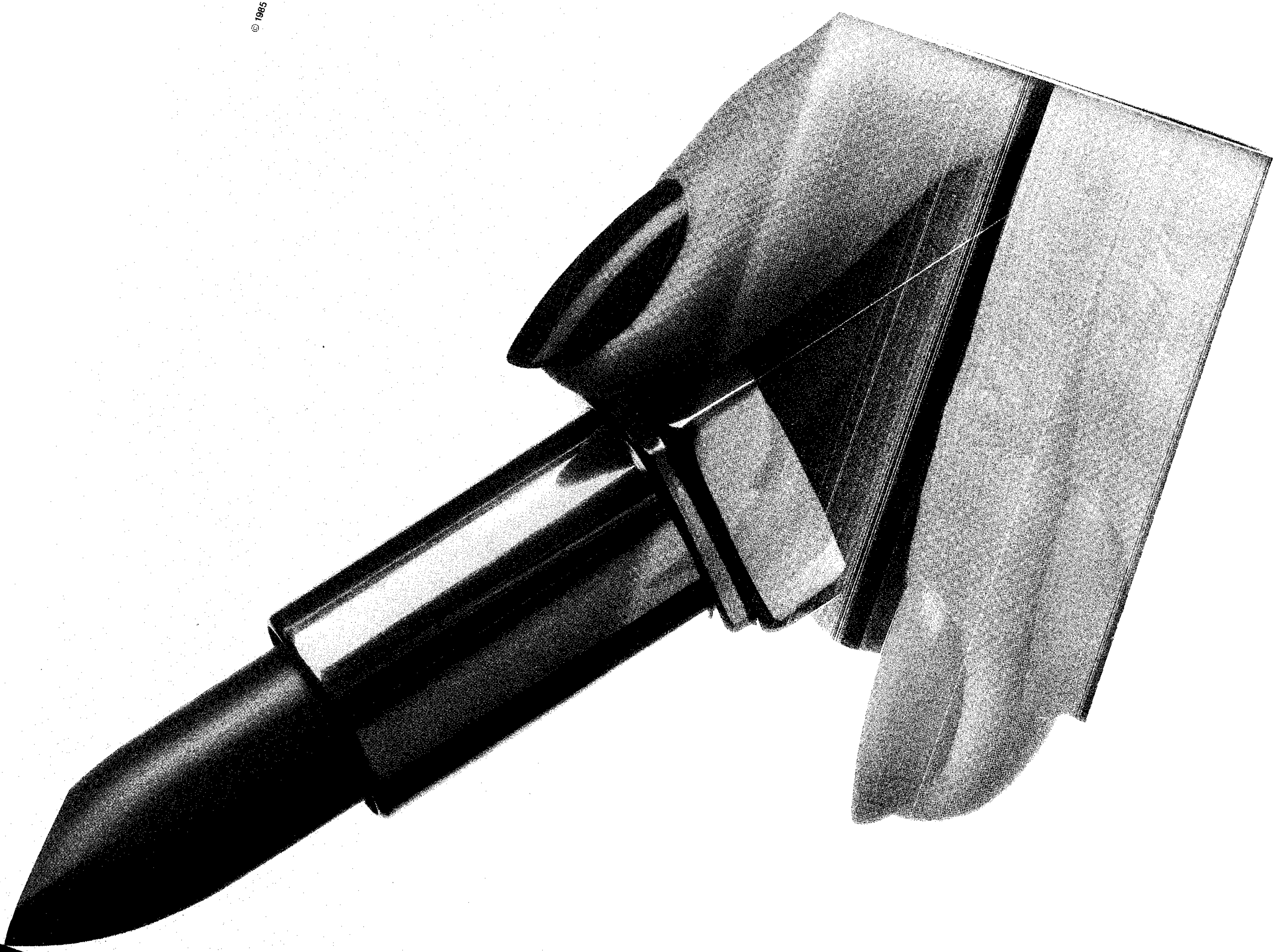

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THE NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

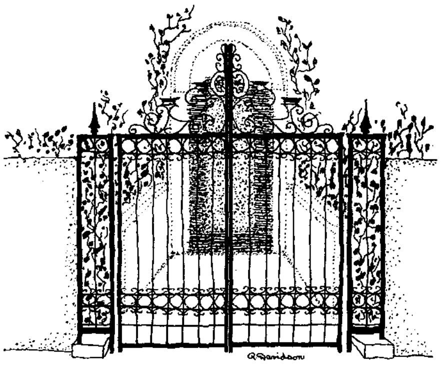
Notes and Comment

A FRIEND writes:

I am spending the week in Rangeley, Maine, a smallish mountain town, twenty miles from the Quebec border, that is notable for its nearness to a lake with a large name (Mooselookmeguntic), for a museum displaying the scientific equipment of the late Wilhelm Reich, and for a restaurant—Doc Grant's—that sits on the line halfway between the equator and the North Pole. The parallel divides the dining room; paintings of tan lovelies in grass skirts line the walls of the southern half, and smiling Eskimos pull fish from holes in the ice on the northern wallpaper. Such places sucker me right in; I once got out of my car in a downpour so I could straddle the Continental Divide and imagine the raindrops that landed near my left boot tumbling toward the Columbia and then the Pacific while the right-foot raindrops took the long trek toward, perhaps, the Mississippi and New Orleans—Jazz City! Tonight, I sat eating my dinner alternately facing the tropics and glancing around at the frozen wastes, and thinking fondly of such arbitrary divisions—lines on a map that can give distinction to an ordinary dining room, an ordinary open-face hot turkey sandwich. As I was happily cataloguing such human inventions—the Arctic Circle, the Mason-Dixon Line, the International Date Line—I thought suddenly, and with less joy, of another set of man-made divisions. Those of us who read the Sunday papers await each New Year with the sad certain knowledge that at least one issue will be given over to a review of the three hundred and sixty-five days just past; at decade's end, everyone with a typewriter looks back at the ten years—years of history, confusion, and drama—that have elapsed. And it is just our luck to be alive at the approach of not only a century's end but also a millennium's. Will these Maine woods still stand once every journal on earth has devoted a special issue to the momentous turning of that calendar page?

It may seem too early to begin worrying, but I fear not. I was planning to devote the twelve months leading up to 1984 to rereading all of Orwell, so that I would be inoculated against the epidemic of analysis I was sure would greet his year. Hardly had 1983 begun, however, when the *Village Voice*, *Commentary*, *The New Republic*, and everyone else except *Road & Track* had something to say about Orwell at length. Any day now, I think, editors will start jumping the gun on the turn of the millennium. So I will go first, and get it over with. My favorite movies of the last thousand years are "Mary Poppins" and "The Treasure of the Sierra Madre." My favorite teen-ploitation film is "Fast Times at Ridgemont High." Among authors (prose), I'd have to say Dostoyevski. Most villainous leading lady, 1000-2000 A.D.: Joan Collins, "Dynasty."

My efforts, though, seem unlikely to forestall the flood. Beginning about 1997, I imagine, it will be all but impossible to walk down Fifth Avenue, so thick will be the crowds of tract-passers and convert-seekers. Vast numbers of people will sell their homes and camp on mountaintops, waiting for an imminent lift. There will be a tremendous Prince resurgence: he had the foresight to record a bouncy doomsaying tune titled "1999." And then—then it will all have come and gone, and things will be as they were. That will be a small shock, and not just to those who must hike down from their mountain bivouacs and resume the life corporeal. All of us have been led to believe, subconsciously, that the turn of the century, to say nothing of the millennium, will bring a little magic. Beginning about thirty years into *this* century, world's fairs began to concentrate on the future. When, one might have asked, was the World of Tomorrow? January 1, 2001. Even written dates in the next century look exotic to our eyes. By 2010, surely we will drive on cushions of air, live in self-cleaning houses, and know world peace. And yet the distance to 2010 is no greater than the distance to 1960.



Science and technology tend to roll on, pulled by curiosity and pushed by enterprise, so the air cars are a possibility. At times, scientific progress does seem almost inevitable. A fact becomes known, and in short order it is developed and put to use. Sometimes I find myself thinking that by the day I contract cancer some bright doctor will have figured out how to cure me. We like to think of social progress in the same way—as inevitable, and as being taken care of by someone else, or, better yet, by "forces." When we think of the twenty-first century, we can't imagine that it will be spent as the last thirty years have been—the world poised to explode. We don't foresee famine, or homelessness, or prejudice. But the cures for these afflictions are not inevitable; in fact, the more we think of the solutions to problems as inevitable the less likely we are to arrive at them. A sort of quietism accompanies assumptions of inevitable progress—a quietism vigorously encouraged by those who like things the way they are. "Don't worry—it will fix itself": those are the pleasantest six words in the language, whether they're said by a dentist or a car mechanic or a politician.

The example of this phenomenon that has been bothering me lately is, of course, South Africa. Change, we are assured, is inevitable. The rand is shaky; the country's white people recognize their isolation; there are a dozen other promising developments. But if such a pleasant situation exists it is only because of years and years of brave, against-the-odds protest. And anyway I am not so sure that true reform is coming. It didn't come after Sharpeville, in 1960, when sixty-seven blacks were massacred, or after the riots that tore up Soweto in 1976. Many are counselling patience. But patience does nothing by itself. William Lloyd Garrison founded his antislavery newspaper, *The Liberator*, with these words: "Tell the mother to gradually extricate her babe from the fire into which it has fallen; but urge me not to use moderation." Martin Luther King, Jr., in his "Letter from Birmingham Jail" and in his book "Why We Can't Wait," made the same point. Time changes nothing—only people change things. Sitting and waiting for the end of apartheid is like sitting in Doc Grant's restaurant and waiting to reach the North Pole. Next year, or the new century, or the millennium is a mere line on the map; you step across it and nothing happens.

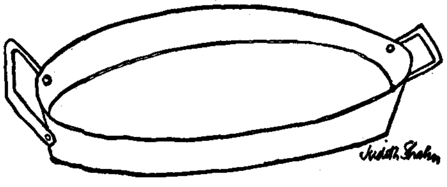
• •

Seaport

DOWN at the South Street Seaport a few weeks ago, the Andrew Fletcher, a brand-new, gleaming-white three-deck side-wheel excursion boat modelled on Hudson River and Long Island Sound steamboats from (naturally) the turn of the century, began gliding around New York Harbor on ninety-minute cruises that offer sandwiches, drinks, Good Humor ice cream, informed and thoughtful narration of the harbor's history—available this fall on weekends—and some of the best passenger-pleasing tricks that generations of local riverboat designers accumulated during the hundred and sixty-four years—from 1807 to 1971—that side-wheel steamboats chugged past the shores of the city. And last week the Rouse Company, the Seaport's commercial partner, which develops picturesque urban marketplaces and suburban shopping malls, kicked off five days of festivities, including four nights of Grucci fireworks and a free Lionel Hampton concert, to mark the official opening of Pier 17, a new three-story glass-and-steel pavilion that occupies most of a fifteen-hundred-foot-long East River pier. Pier 17 will have as many as ninety new shops and restaurants, and thus will more than double the total retail space at the Seaport, bringing it up to two hundred thousand square feet.

The idea behind the Seaport has been that somehow a nonprofit institution like the Seaport Museum and a for-profit corporation like the Rouse Company could, between them, if they had a federal grant and the coöperation of city and state, come up with a mixture of activities that would bring people back to an early-to-mid-nineteenth-century maritime neighborhood—this particular one still serves as the home of the Fulton Fish Market, which is practically the oldest wholesale market in the country—and at the same time generate both the sort of money that would preserve the district's buildings and the sort of understanding and liking that would maintain its feeling and flavor. The Seaport Museum is now getting ready to announce a five-year, multimillion-dollar expansion plan of its own, which could result in approximately sixty thousand square feet of new exhibition space and could also more than double the size of the Seaport itself by restoring several adjacent blocks of historic buildings and filling them with a permanent residential community.

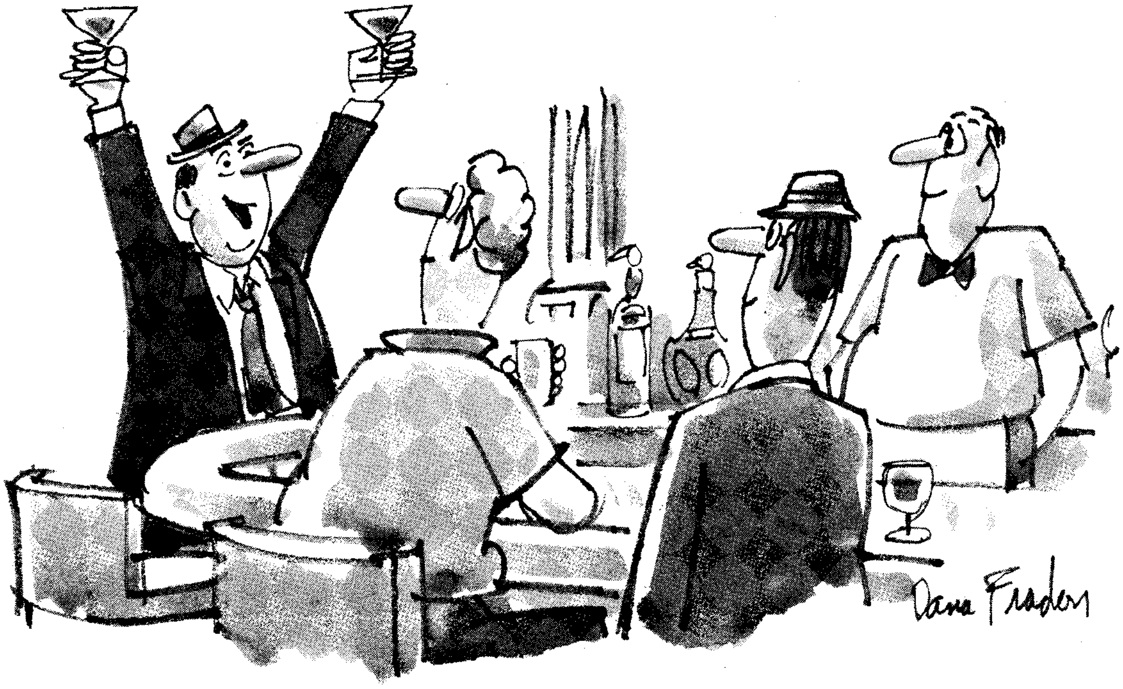
Recent economic projections show that by the year 2000 (here we are again) tourism will be the biggest business in New York State. Which means that, in a new way, part of the job of being a resident of New York City is thinking about how other people will experience this place and whether they will find their time here well spent. If this city, or any city, were to give itself the task of drawing up a truly comprehensive plan to welcome and entertain visitors in a way that would benefit both hosts and guests, what would go into such a plan? A thousand new office buildings wouldn't help. But in an afternoon at the unfinished Seaport and out on the Andrew Fletcher we ran across several concepts that the city could start putting into wider circulation, either separately or together. What they have in common is a concern for creating the conditions in which people can enjoy things or absorb new information.



THE route of the Andrew Fletcher takes it briefly up the East River, under the Brooklyn Bridge. Then it turns around, goes downriver, and moves directly out onto the broad expanse of the harbor's Upper Bay. Here, after hugging the Brooklyn shore for about three miles, it turns northwest, crosses two miles of open water, and noses past the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island. And then the Fletcher paddles its way back home to Manhattan, the Battery, and the Seaport.

The Fletcher follows this particular route in the service of Harbor Park, which is one component of a still emerging idea—the urban cultural park. The idea, in part, is that cities need more parks but don't have room for them, so they can take older neighborhoods that still have whatever shape they were built to have—residential, commercial, or industrial—and treat them as parks. This idea would sound totally cynical and unfeeling were it not for a change that can be arranged to happen inside people. That is, you don't just say, "O.K., henceforth this old textile mill is a park." Instead, you work to create in and around the mill the conditions of a functioning park, meaning a public place where people can feel at home—safe, at ease, off duty, and able to move around at their own pace. The change that occurs is that in such an environment even an old mill can offer people the pleasure and nourishment of an Arcadia. *American Land Forum*, a magazine that looks at how people use and value the land, puts it this way: "What once seemed dull, ugly or commonplace in our urban landscape appears as a rich tapestry embroidered from the lives and dreams of earlier generations."

The most successful urban cultural park in the country is Lowell, Massachusetts, now the Lowell National Historical Park: it attracts big crowds and turns them into satisfied customers by giving them a chance to ride canal boats and trolley cars and see the old mills of America's first planned industrial town. ("There is no single 'park' at Lowell National Historical Park; the entire city is the park," said the *Times.*) New York State, not to be outdone, is now putting in place a statewide system of thirteen urban cultural parks, all of which have the mission of promoting preservation, recreation, education, and economic development simultaneously. Harbor Park, which consists of the Seaport, Battery Park, Fulton Ferry, the Statue of Liberty, Ellis Island, and Sailors' Snug Harbor, in Staten Island, is the first New York State Urban Cultural Park in New York City. And Harbor Park is using the Andrew Fletcher to help people see how six different waterfront parks actually can constitute a single entity.



"To Pete Rose and Ty Cobb!"

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As it turns out, a boat is an absolute must for Harbor Park, because, although this is not formally included in the list of the park's components, the water, the being-out-on-the-water between the six harbor sites, is what creates the conditions that transform the New York waterfront into a living panorama of more than three hundred and fifty years of human experience. (Though there are six "parks" in Harbor Park, it is the entire harbor—four hundred and fifty square miles of water—that makes it an urban cultural park.) Ellen Fletcher, a former executive director of the Seaport Museum, and Richard Rabinowitz, a historian and museum planner and her partner in a new company called The American History Workshop, wrote the narration offered by two guides on the Andrew Fletcher, and they have made clever use of the transforming effect of the water—partly by seeing to it that people are allowed intervals of silence in which to respond to it.

THEN, there's simply being out on the Andrew Fletcher. This means talking about another emerging concept—the character vessel. Part of the reason the Fletcher is a pleasure to ride around on is that its operator, Alexander L. Wiener, Jr., is an experienced New York restaurateur, a good proportion of whose staff—drawn largely from the offspring of his neighbors in Brooklyn Heights—consists of likable young men and women in red-and-white striped polo shirts who take their work seriously and spend a good many of their spare moments polishing brass and wiping salt spray off the windows. Much of the rest of the pleasure has to do with the fact that Bryan McAllister, of the New York tugboat family—whose boatyard built the Fletcher at the behest of the Seaport Museum—made sure that William G. Muller, a noted marine painter, who was once a teenage apprentice riverboat pilot himself, got involved in the Fletcher's design. The result is that the Fletcher is a character vessel—a complicated idea that is being worked out in the minds of a number of modern boat designers and that first stirred in Muller's head one day in 1943, when, as a small boy in Inwood, he walked down to the Hudson River and watched something he had never heard of, one of the huge old Hudson River Day Liners, glistening white, all flags flying, speeding past at over twenty-five miles an hour. Building a character vessel, as Muller sees it, is not a matter of copying the past, or even of liking it. It has to do with liking a riverboat ride that allows passengers a chance to experience the river flowing by them—and therefore liking the work of old-time riverboat designers who liked that kind of ride.

To experience a river when you're out on it aboard a big boat, you need to be able to see the water, you need to know that you're out on the water, you need to be able to ride along without a lot of shaking around, and you need to feel the breezes brushing past. Sidewheel paddleboats don't shake you around with vibrations—that's one reason the Fletcher is a side-wheeler. The center of the top deck of the Fletcher is raised, so that no matter how many people are standing between you and the rail you can always see the water. Any moving air can reach you, because the rails on the top two decks are fitted with pieces of stamped-aluminum netting instead of with solid metal. And you certainly know you're out on a boat, because every deck on the Fletcher—like every deck on any boat built until about ten years ago—has sheer: a gentle curve down from the bow to the center and up again to the stern which is not like anything underfoot anywhere on land.

No Fooling Around

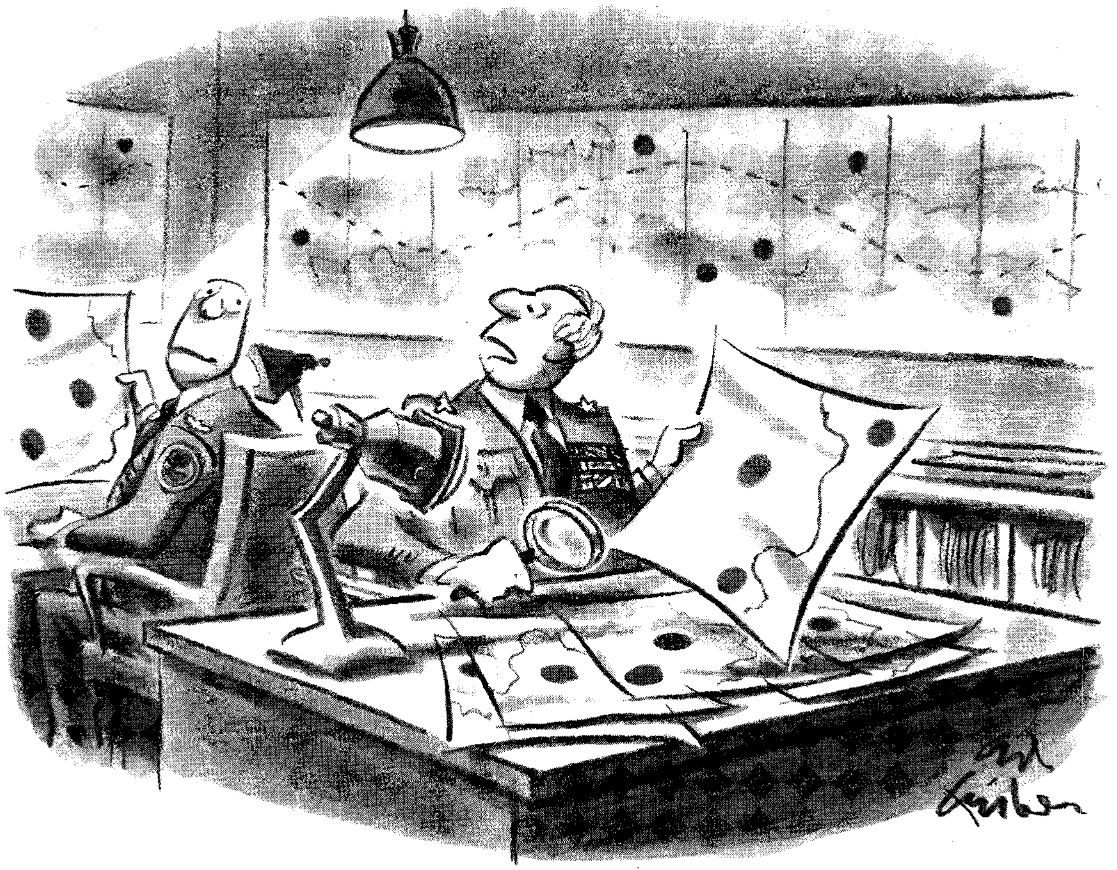
ACCORDING to Eugene Tso's résumé, his expertise encompasses "Kolomeyka, Windmueller, Hopak, Bavarian Ländler, Dreisteyrer, Neapolitan Tarantella, Kreuz Koenig, Zillertaler Ländler, Dodi Li, Parado de Valdemosa, Krakowiak, etc."—which means that Mr. Tso's expertise is international folk dancing. License No. 672, issued by the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation, specifies that for a few hours a week, from mid-April through late October, a lovely spot in Battery Park belongs to Mr. Tso. If the weather obliges, shortly after noon every Saturday—and also on Memorial Day, the Fourth of July, and Labor Day—Mr. Tso, wearing a shoulder bag and pulling a shopping cart, leaves his apartment, on the upper West Side, and takes the Broadway local down to South Ferry, the end of the line. When he reaches his designated spot—a patch of grass and pavement just west of the war memorial, about twenty-five yards from the tip of Manhattan, and centered between two evenly spaced rows of euonymus trees—he unpacks. He spreads out two plastic ground cloths, sets up two aluminum snack tables, props open the shopping cart, and, by resting Masonite boards on top of it, creates a shelf for an electric amplifier. A tape player and a portable power source stand on the snack tables, along with a couple of cigar boxes filled with tapes. Atop the amplifier goes a black plastic sign with raised white letters: "Eugene Tso." Attached to that is a smaller sign that says, "Everyone Is Welcome to Join in the Dancing."

On a recent Saturday, Mr. Tso wore a short-sleeved white shirt, tan slacks, and a wide orange leather belt. He is slender and slightly stooped, and has coffee-brown eyes and sparse gray hair. Almost fifty years ago, Mr. Tso immigrated to the United States from China. During the nineteen-forties, he belonged to a Y.M.C.A. in Brooklyn, where he swam, did calisthenics, and played basketball and bridge. One day, a bridge partner suggested, as a change of pace, folk dancing. "We go to Washington Irving High School for folk-dancing class," Mr. Tso recalled while he was setting up his equipment. "I watch it and say, 'I could do better.' Next, I go to music library near Lexington Avenue. I spend the whole day there, looking for material. I discover books about folk dancing, but I also discover that people don't write well, they make mistakes. So I study many books and I dance and I write books myself."

Mr. Tso is now the author and publisher of four dance manuals—"Folk Dance Instructions, Volumes I-IV"—and he pays attention to new trends. "Nowadays, there are so many new good dances coming from *Israel*," he told us. "If the people want it, we follow the *people*. I never go to Israel, I never go to European countries, I never go to Russia. I only study *books*. I have my principles. First principle is: no fooling around with the steps. *Maximum* accuracy is *very* important. If you fool around with the steps, the people will *find out*. Some folk-dance leaders—they don't *teach*. They don't *lead*. The reason? I don't know. They just like to play the tape recorder, I think."

Even when Mr. Tso is merely pushing a button on a tape recorder—that is, even when his feet are stationary—other parts of him dance. Frequently during conversation, he leans his head back and looks skyward and his arms levitate as if he were in a pool of salt water, floating effortlessly. At other moments, his features intensify—"Eureka!"-like—and for emphasis he moves his hands as if coaxing birds to fly. Mr. Tso does not display a sign that says that everyone is welcome to contribute. He does, however, keep an empty cigar box handy. If anyone cares to make a donation, he does not complain. "No, not supposed to charge," Mr. Tso explained. "Only *donations* accepted. You donate by *free will*. Some people donate a quarter. Some people donate *two* quarters. Some people—the dancers—give a *dollar*."

There was a time when Mr. Tso taught in various public and private schools around the city, and he now conducts weekly folk-dancing sessions at a senior center in the East Village and at a Y.M.C.A. in Chelsea. Most of the regulars who show up on Saturdays in Battery Park are his contemporaries, more or less. Chances are they did some dancing in their youth and then allowed thirty or forty years to slip by with no dancing. They



"Maybe I've been in satellite-reconnaissance too long, Macpherson. One global trouble spot is beginning to look like every other global trouble spot to me."

seem grateful for the opportunity to make up for lost time and to exercise their critical faculties:

Encomium—"He runs a better session, Eugene does. There's no comparison. Most of us like to dance what he plays, because he plays what we like."

Rhetorical monologue—"What is this? Who knows? If I don't know, I make up my own dance. Who cares? I forgot my knee brace. It's in my husband's car. So, fancy I'm not doing today. Right?"

Historical perspective—"He goes by the book. But the book was written eighty years ago."

Sweeping dismissal—"*That's* what they do here? I thought this was supposed to be folk dancing. This isn't folk dancing. You wanna see dancers? Go to Central Park."

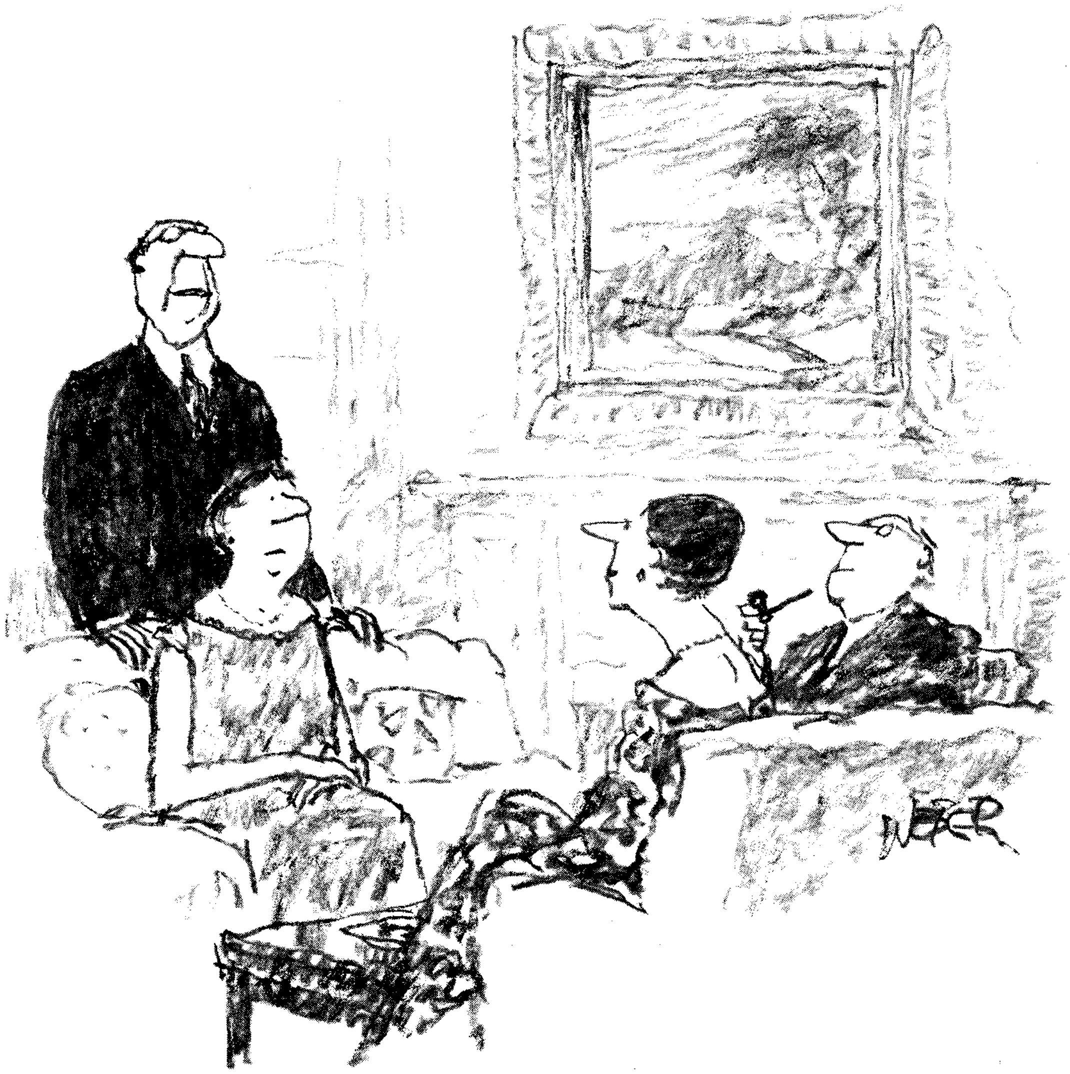
Self-analysis—"I want you to know I walk with a cane and I have a bad heart condition. But the doctor wants me to do this. So if I'm tired sometimes I'll come in, like, on the third chorus."

Idle observation—"I had my hair done yesterday. I'm worried about rain and low-flying birds. Come on. Let's dance."

The dancing lasts from two to six, and the regulars, many of whom commute from Brooklyn, tend to arrive early. Fifteen or twenty show up each week: Ann, Max, Jean, Martha, Lily, Irving, Sid, Esther, Lenore, Isabel, a couple of Roses—about twice as many women as men. They bring plastic shopping bags packed with lunches and insect repellent and other paraphernalia, and when dancing time comes they place their belongings on one of Mr. Tso's ground cloths. The women wear pinks and limes and lavenders and floral prints, along with sensible shoes and, on bright days, baseball caps. Periodically, foundation garments are adjusted. Nobody dances every dance. Some people sit for a while, some take a walk for five minutes, some eat a peach.

There are times when the group dances, consecutively, a hustle, a Rumanian line dance, a rumba, and an Israeli military march. As the music plays, the dancers eye Mr. Tso or each other and talk to him or to each other or to themselves. "Face me. . . . The other way . . . Right foot. Four out, four in. It's one-two, two-two . . ." And "It's back-forward, back-forward. Two to the right, two to the left, and then you do with the cockamamie feet." And "You've got to make it a little faster, Eugene."

The other Saturday, we spent several hours in Battery Park with Mr. Tso and the dancers. Often, at the end of a dance Mr. Tso bowed solemnly toward the harbor. In the harbor—the backdrop—sailboats, ferryboats, hydroplanes, tugboats, and the Andrew Fletcher passed by. A blimp floated overhead. Hundreds of smiling strollers paused to watch: a Pakistani tour group, a Japanese tour group (busy with cameras, grateful to have come to New York and found something so exotic). A police car crept past, followed by a trio of roller skaters wearing Walkmans and sunglasses. As we left, the dancers were doing a complicated Israeli circle dance—lots of handclapping and slow pirouettes—accompanied by a klezmer tune called "Dumyah Dumyah." One of the dancers said aloud, to no one in particular, "He's in all his glory today—Eugene is." A not exactly petite married couple in matching red shirts and candy-striped slacks rose from a bench. For some time, they had been only watching, but now they suddenly abandoned inhibition: they moved with the grace of barges in rough water. They had joined the dancing.



"Leona learned about economics from me—by osmosis."

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BOYS

FOG rose from the swamp behind the high school. Flags flapped in the fog, and signs, walls, and shrubs were softened and obscured. As soon as Margaret and Billy passed the last gray locker and came out through the heavy double doors, Margaret spotted her father's red Toyota floating on the dark tar of the school parking lot, headlights burning. When Margaret and Billy got closer, they saw her father standing erect by the car, looking around for a familiar face.

The dented doors on the Toyota's passenger side were left open. Margaret hopped in front and Billy ducked in back, furtively, as though afraid someone might see him. "You must be Bill," Mr. Scott said, getting in last and looking at Billy in the rearview mirror. He smiled. Billy's arm was already thrown across the top of the back seat. His head was cocked. Cool and distant, he stared at Mr. Scott's reflection, at Margaret, at the dusty dashboard littered with Kleenex balls. His fine yellow hair was parted left to right, and every stray strand was swept across the top of his head, as if he were getting bald. Actually, Billy did shed a few hairs every day, leaving some on Margaret's sweaters, skirts, and shoes. Sometimes, standing before the bathroom mirror, she thought she'd go crazy picking them off.

"Don't trust fog, Bill," Mr. Scott cautioned as they crept through the parking lot toward the narrow gates. He honked every few seconds, sounding a high, birdlike beep. His headlights briefly illuminated passing figures and a few of the dogs that always showed up when school got out. Nothing else was distinguishable. Once they left the lot and hit the open road, he brought them up to twenty miles an hour. Billy squirmed and tapped his feet.

They drove up into the little rolling hills beyond the school, and the air cleared. Sunlight washed over the windshield. Margaret unzipped her lilac windbreaker with one long pull. Billy rolled down both windows in back. Tall pine trees lined both sides of the road, backdropped by an occasional stone wall or picket fence and a Colonial-style house of wood or brick. They were passing through a part of town that seemed, for about sixty seconds, like a travelogue photograph of the New England countryside. It never failed to captivate Mr. Scott, who loved to linger on this scenic stretch. "Smell that fresh air, Bill," he said with relish.

They passed the nine-hole golf course, built on several successive hillsides. It was awfully brown and bare for a golf course—too few trees, too much sand, no water hazards. Margaret smiled wistfully. A few nights before, Billy had driven them along the gravel access road high above the fifth hole. They were in his father's car, a silver-and-green Plymouth sedan. The golf course lay spread out below them. Looking out over the Plymouth's hood, they watched the dark surface of the fairways. It was really a prettier place at night or from a great height.

Billy stirred in the back seat. Margaret glanced up in the mirror, and there he was, with a bored look on his face. She knew that look: he was missing music, missing speed.

"Want to listen to the radio?" she asked smoothly, turning around to catch a full view of Billy.

"Whatever Bill wants," her father said with a wave of the hand.

Billy nodded his head. Margaret could see his pink scalp as the wind rushed through his hair, and for an instant she imagined him hairless. She flipped on some hard rock.

Familiar houses flashed by. Mr. Scott drove faster as they got closer to home. Margaret thought Billy might crawl out an open window or dive out the door, so she closed her eyes. Mr. Scott pulled into the driveway. "Kids," he said solemnly, talking above the music, "we're here."

XIV
XIVth STREET
ZIEGLER

BILLY smiled when he saw the house. Then he was gone, the first one out of the car. Dressed in black chino jeans, a black button-down long-sleeved shirt with pale-pink stripes, and black-and-white high-top sneakers, Billy stepped boldly into the pure, dying sunlight. The bright-red house loomed like a fire station at the center of the reseeded lawn—a strange sight for Billy, who was used to seeing the house at night, through the darkened glass of his father's car.

"Margaret, Margaret, Margaret," the father said, smiling at the empty back seat.

All of a sudden, Billy stopped in the middle of the driveway and looked up. He had a curl to his body that suggested he expected something from the sky to fall on top of his head. Margaret figured that he was chickening out, but he was only staring at Mrs. Scott as she leaned out a second-story window.

"Bill?" she called down weakly.

"Billy," Margaret yelled, shouting his name happily. Father and daughter were coming up the driveway arm in arm, slowly, as in a wedding. When they reached Billy, he was still gaping at the upstairs window.

"My mother," Margaret said matter-of-factly.

"Call her Rita," Mr. Scott said.

Billy looked at both of them queerly, as if he didn't know which one to believe. When he looked up again, she was gone.

"Fast," Mr. Scott said.

It was true. Moments later, she appeared in the breezeway door. The driveway sloped slightly uphill, so they all had to look up into Mrs. Scott's smiling face as they continued toward the house. Margaret pulled her arm away from her father, hearing his mild grumble, and tried to grab hold of Billy's hand. It was like trying to catch a greenhead fly.

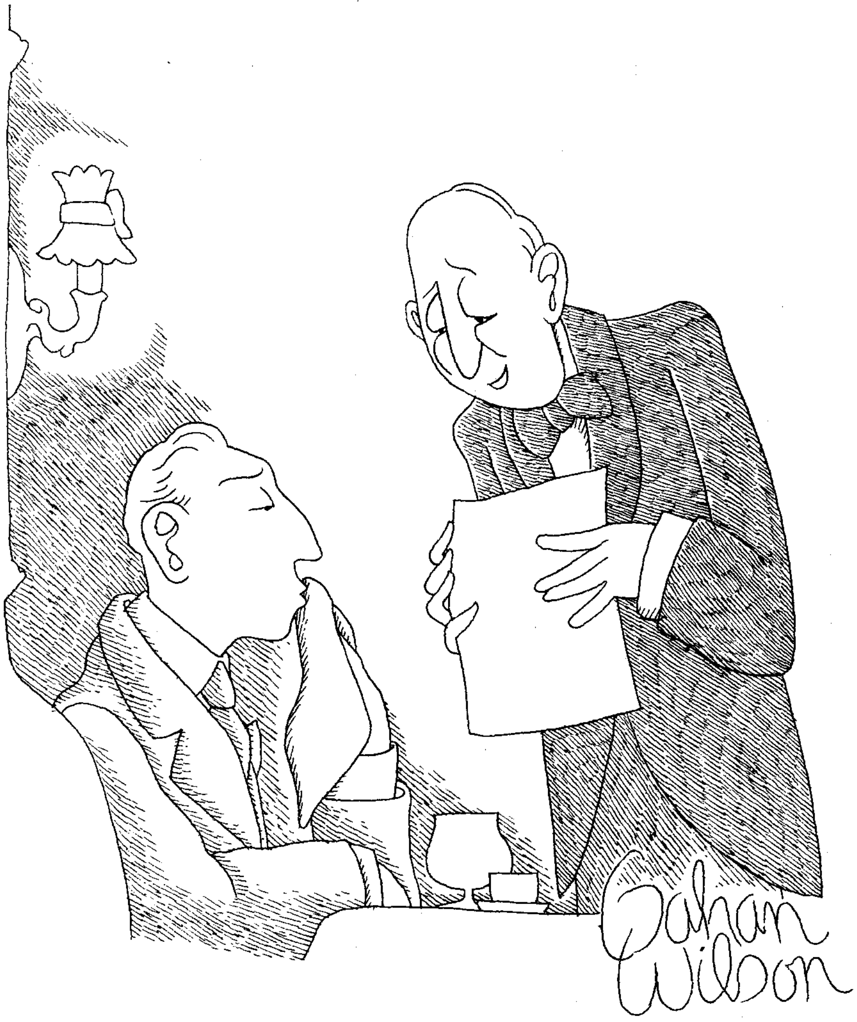
They followed Mrs. Scott through the house to a screened-in back porch festooned with hanging English-ivy plants and multicolored Japanese lanterns. Billy flopped down in a chaise longue and let his arms dangle over the sides. Margaret sat beside him like a bedside visitor. Her parents sat on the edge of the rocker couch, the centerpiece of their indoor/outdoor furniture collection, and gazed at the floor.

"Here we are," Mr. Scott said, looking up as if he were reading the words somewhere on the wall. He seemed pleased.

"Bill and Margaret," Mrs. Scott said, trying out the names. She was a big believer in how things sounded together. The way she figured it, some sounds clashed, some merged, some just drifted apart and floated away. "Hmm," she said after a while, maybe meaning nothing; maybe meaning she liked it more than "Harold and Margaret" or "Hans and Margaret," two of last year's big disappointments.

"Honey, you'll embarrass the kids," Mr. Scott said gently.

"We're not kids," Margaret said, which made her parents smile and look at Billy as if they expected him to be smiling, too. Billy, though, was distracted by something on the other side of the porch—an insect racing across the screen.



"How was your lonely little dinner, sir?"

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"So," the father said, rubbing his hands. "Forty-six days together. Isn't that something."

"Forty-six days was yesterday," Margaret corrected him. She sat straighter in the chair and tried to shore up Billy with a hard glare. (He missed it.) She wanted a cigarette in the worst way, the way she always wanted one after an hour-long assembly, and almost lit one up.

"You met in chemistry class?" Mrs. Scott asked.

"In French," Margaret said wearily. Everyone had heard the story before.

"Senior year," Mr. Scott said, shaking his head nostalgically.

"Billy's a sophomore," Margaret said quickly.

This stopped them cold. They sat awhile, looking blank and dazed.

"Jesus, Bill," Mr. Scott finally said, trying hard to be affable but making it clear Billy had let him down.

"A sophomore?" Mrs. Scott asked, almost whispering the word. "You're a senior and Bill's a sophomore?"

"Hey," Mr. Scott said, shrugging his shoulders, "he's not a freshman."

The arms of the chaise longue slid forward with a click. Billy sat up and looked around as if he didn't know whom they were talking about. When he was upright and his chin didn't droop, Margaret thought she could catch the shadow of a faint blond mustache. It was nothing, really. It could have been dust.

"Bill and Margaret," Mrs. Scott said harshly.

"Honey," Mr. Scott scolded her.

"He's just a boy," Mrs. Scott said.

"Jesus, Rita, they're all boys," Mr. Scott said.

"How are Bill's grades?" Mrs. Scott suddenly wanted to know. "As high as Harold's?"

"Higher," Margaret lied.

Billy began to whistle. It was Margaret's favorite punk-rock song, "Flying Glass." She bit her lip and stared stonily into space.

Billy stood up. Just like that. Margaret's parents, of course, were startled. Mrs. Scott put her hand to her mouth. Mr. Scott arched his eyebrows and tilted his head. The suddenness of the movement was probably what got them—the way Billy sprang from the chair without any telltale body language or apparent preparation. He was one of those boys—something popped into his head and he did it.

"Where's he going?" Mrs. Scott said.

"He's not going anywhere," Margaret shot back. "He's just stretching."

Billy walked out of the porch and started down the hallway to the front door. The last thing he did was check his hair in an antique mirror. Margaret was stunned. It was like watching a plane crash.

"Maybe he's going to the bathroom," Mr. Scott said.

A door slammed. Margaret's face crinkled and crumpled, and her father leapt up suddenly to console her. "Don't worry," he said, bending down to put his arm all the way around her. "The sea is full of fish."

Mrs. Scott cleared her throat—a warning to her husband to watch his words.

"How about a beer?" he asked cheerfully.

"Lou!" Mrs. Scott objected.

"A beer," Margaret repeated, liking the sound of the word.

"No," Mrs. Scott insisted.

"Rita," Mr. Scott said in a knowing way, "the girl needs a beer."

"There's Coke, Sprite, and Squirt in the refrigerator," Mrs. Scott said, trying to sound final.

"I'd like a beer," Margaret said. Tears were coming, or about to come, and her throat was tight and dry.

"Maybe Margaret should lie down," Mrs. Scott suggested.

Margaret started to sob and shake and pull her hair. It was crazy. Her body seemed like one big open mouth. One of her girlfriends always said that crying is a drug, and Margaret realized she was right. Crying was great.

"We'll get in the car and go look for him," Mr. Scott declared.

"We'll all go," Mrs. Scott added, caught up in the wave of sympathy.

"We'll look under every stone," Mr. Scott promised.

They were both standing now, bent over Margaret. Margaret's eyes were burning and her nose was wet. She blew softly into her father's good handkerchief and gave it back to him. Another flurry of weeping and wailing followed. Mr. Scott pulled her out of the chair and crushed her in a bear hug. "Hey, hey, hey," he crooned. Then Mrs. Scott, who must have slipped out for a moment, handed Margaret a tall glass of water and draped one of her itchy purple cardigans over Margaret's shaking shoulders.

When they walked out to the car, the late-afternoon sun surprised them. Mr. Scott tipped open the glove compartment and reached for his sunglasses. Mrs. Scott took out hers. Margaret seized the back seat, where she had a perfect view of the backs of her parents' heads and, from time to time, strange sideways glimpses of their dark eyeballs behind the smoky glasses. It was like going off somewhere with spies.

THEY cruised the streets and back streets like sharks in shallow water. Mr. Scott stretched his neck toward the windshield, Mrs. Scott pressed her face against the door window.

"There's someone," Mr. Scott kept saying.

"Keep your eyes on the road," Mrs. Scott told him repeatedly.

Margaret looked around casually, quietly. She felt dried out—cried out—and sleepy. Every tree, every street sign, every blind curve seemed dreamlike. Mrs. Scott kept glancing back, ready to pass a Kleenex over her shoulder.

Within fifteen minutes, Mr. Scott had thrown down his sunglasses on the seat beside him. "Sun's going down," he said, as if he couldn't believe it.

"There's another half hour of light," Mrs. Scott insisted, leaving her glasses on.

While they continued the search, Margaret closed her eyes and toppled over. An image of Billy appeared in her mind like a flashback or the opening frames of a rock video. It all seemed far away and unreal, the sort of thing you see in a fleeting moment and instantly forget.

"Look," Mr. Scott whispered.

"She's really asleep," Mrs. Scott answered after a while.

"I'm not," Margaret said, sitting up too fast and getting dizzy.

They were already on the far side of town, in the so-called flats, passing the dark waters of the reservoir and riding by condo complexes shaped in the images of castles, courtyards, and Swiss mountain villages.

"Beautiful," Mrs. Scott murmured, as if she were enjoying the view from a tour bus.

When they came to the town line

THE SALT POND

Mid-September my dead father's birthday
again by the low shore I watch gulls fly inland
white gulls riding a knowledge older than they are

by now you are eighty-eight and need nothing old friend
twelve years in the white sky out of the wind

once more at the end of summer the first map of the coast
looks out from the wall
a shadow imperceptibly darkening
the names dissolve across it
white clouds race over the marshes

the gulls have gone with their age
I know the wind

—W. S. MERWIN

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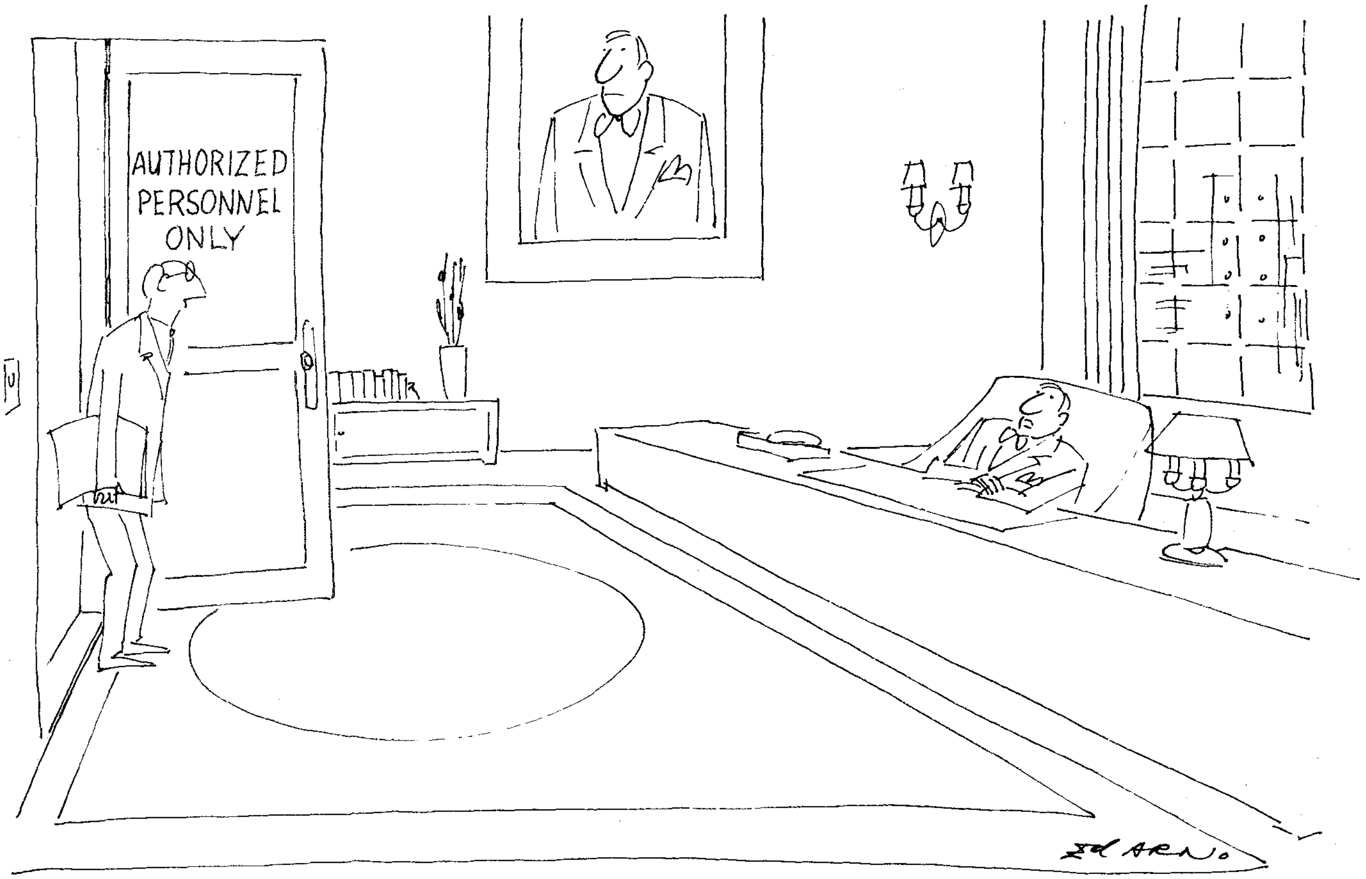

"See here, Higby! I'm the only authorized personnel around here!"

• •

and the familiar sign with the Rotary wheel, Mr. Scott pulled over to the side of the road, shut off the engine, and rested his forehead against the top of the steering wheel. "We tried, Margaret," he said gravely.

"We looked everywhere," Mrs. Scott said with a slow shake of the head.

It was dark inside the car. Mrs. Scott flicked on the overhead light and turned around to get a good look at Margaret, who blew some loose hair away so her mother could see her face. (She always said that she never got a clear view of Margaret's face.) Her mother stared for a few seconds, which Margaret didn't mind very much, and her mouth relaxed into a crooked line. Mrs. Scott leaned a little closer. "Men," she said softly, as if she were naming some sweet and terrible species of bird or beast.

Mr. Scott coughed. "I think we should be going back." He sounded like a Scoutmaster. He put out the overhead light and switched on the emergency blinkers. The dashboard lights flashed on and off like a spaceship's.

Mrs. Scott shrugged off the distraction. In the blinking lights, her eyes shone like bright-blue dots. She reminded Margaret of those pretty, possessed girls you see in devil movies. "Men," Mrs. Scott repeated, letting go of the word with a little droning "n" sound. There was some resignation in her voice, too, as if she were sure she was warning Margaret too late.

They made a U-turn and headed home. Her parents took turns monitoring Margaret's expression. There was nothing to see, really. Mr. Scott tried slowing down at the "MISTER HAMBURGER" and "FRAPPE FARM" signs, hoping to strike a spark. Margaret scratched her chin and looked away.

Crickets were chirping all over the neighborhood. Bugs swarmed under the tall lawn lamp. Margaret walked through the house without turning on a light. Her parents followed. They stood at the foot of the stairs and watched her go up.

Margaret flopped right down on her bed, a giant queen-size that used to be her parents' bed. She felt lost on it, like a cat in a swimming pool. Pretty soon the bedroom door opened a crack, spoiling the perfect darkness. Her mother poked her head in. A minute later her father peered in, looking around, and withdrew. Watching the door, Margaret reached under the bed and found a pack of cigarettes. Luckily, the transistor radio on the nightstand had an illuminated dial, and she spun the knob to WKKT. Music filled the room—rocking, socking music. The whole thing made Margaret feel tingly and primitive, like one of those animals that live in the dark.

—PETER GORDON

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THERE'LL ALWAYS BE AN ENGLAND

[*From the London Times*]

Naturalists in Gloucestershire are trying to discover the size of the country's glow-worm population.

Records of past sightings have been compiled by Mr David Atty, the Gloucestershire Naturalist Society's beetle recorder, to assist the search.

Anyone who sees one of the insects' telltale dim light in fields and hedgerows is asked to note the date and map reference and send details to Mr Keith Alexander, of Cecily Hill, Cirencester.

DRIVER

RITA says the living-room lights keep her awake when she goes to bed before I do, which is most of the time. The light comes down the hall and under the bedroom door, she says, and in the dark it's like a laser. So on Sunday, after she'd gone to bed, I started to read *Money* in semi-darkness, tilting the pages to get the light from a book lamp clipped onto the magazine. That didn't work, so I gave it up and watched a TV program about lowriders in San Diego. They put special suspensions in their cars so they can bounce them up and down. That's not all they do, but it's sort of the center of things for them. I'd seen the cars before, seen pictures of them jumping—a wonderful thing, just on its own merits. I watched the whole show. It lasted half an hour, and ended with a parade of these wobbling, hopping, jerking cars creeping down a tree-lined California street with a tinkly Mexican love song in the background, and when it was done I had tears in my eyes because I wasn't driving one of the cars. I muted the sound, sat in the dark, and imagined flirting with a pretty Latin girl in a short, tight, shiny dress with a red belt slung waist to hip, her cleavage perfect and brown, on a hot summer night with a breeze, on a glittering street, with the smell of gasoline and Armor All in the air, oak leaves rattling over the thump of the car engine, and me slouched at the wheel of a violet Mercury, ready to pop the front end for a smile.

In the morning I left a note attached to the refrigerator with the tiny TV-dinner magnet, telling Rita what time I'd be home from the office, then got in the Celica and headed for the freeway. I'd been in traffic for half an hour, most of it behind a bald, architect-looking guy in a BMW 2002, when I saw a sign for Kleindienst Highway Auto Sales. This was a hand-painted sign, one quarter billboard size, in a vacant lot alongside the freeway—a rendering of a customized 1949 Ford. I got off at the next exit and went back up the feeder to get to this place, which was a shell-paved lot with a house trailer at the rear, strings of silver and gold decorations above, and a ten-foot Cyclone fence topped with knife wire surrounding it.

A guy jumped out of the trailer the minute I got onto the property. He followed me until I parked, then threw an arm around my shoulders before I had my car door shut. "Howdy," he said. "Phil Kleindienst. Hunting a big beauty, am I right?"

"Just looking," I said.

"We got the classics," he said, making a broad gesture with his free arm. He swung me around toward a Buick four-door. "Mainstream, high-profile, domestic, soon-to-be-sought-after classic road machines for the world of tomorrow."

"That's a big amen," I said.

He liked that. He laughed and walked me around the lot, keeping his hands on me the whole time—on my shoulder, my forearm, my back. He didn't have any cars that weren't huge and American, and he didn't have any custom cars. "Take a gander at this," he said, opening a brown Chrysler sedan. "This baby's autorama clean."

We went up and down the rows together. He was citing virtues, giving me histories, and I was looking for the hot rods. Finally, I said, "What about this sign?"

"What sign?" Phil said.

"Out there on the freeway," I said. I pointed back up to where the sign was. We could just see the back of it.

"Aw, you don't want to mess with that stuff. Lemme show you an Eldorado I got."

He started to move again. I said, "I'm a little late. I guess I'll have to come back another time. Thanks anyway."

"Hold your hanky there," he said. "I got one. I'll show you one. A Lincoln, pretty old."

He took me around beside the trailer to a corner with a banner that said "BARGAIN CORRAL" strung over the top. There was one car there, and it could have been in the TV show I'd seen. No price was soaped on the windshield, so I asked.

"Oh, hell," he said. "I don't know. Too much. Let's go back up front, lemme show you some sweethearts." He turned me toward the front of the lot. "How about this Caddy? About a '77, a honey-dripper. Purrs like a pistol."

I stopped him. "You don't want to tell me what you're getting for this one? What's the deal?"

"Whew," he said. "You're too tough. You're kidding me, right?" He waited a minute, looking me over to see whether or not I was kidding him. "You don't want that porker, do you?"

The Lincoln was pale blue with black and green pinstripes, front wheels smaller than the rear, and it was low, maybe two inches off the ground. There was an airbrush illustration on the side,

"The bidding will start at eleven million dollars."

between the front and rear wheel wells—a picture of the Blessed Virgin, in aqua-and-white robes, strolling in an orange grove, behind each tree of which was a wolf, lip curled, saliva shining. The glass in the windshield and in the doors was dark green, and the steering wheel was huge and white. A head-bobbing metal Bambi—I think it was supposed to be Bambi—sat on the shelf behind the back seat, staring out the rear window.

I said, "I'm just curious. What's it worth?"

He let go of me for the first time since I'd arrived, backing away, putting a little distance between us as he studied the car. Finally, he slapped his hands together and said, "I don't even want to give you a price on that there. See, that's my boy Pico's car. Was, anyway. Pico got shot up in Nam. He was this kid used to hang around, then worked for me. Built the car himself—did all the custom work, put in the hydraulics, stereo. All that in there's rhino skin. I don't even know where he got that."

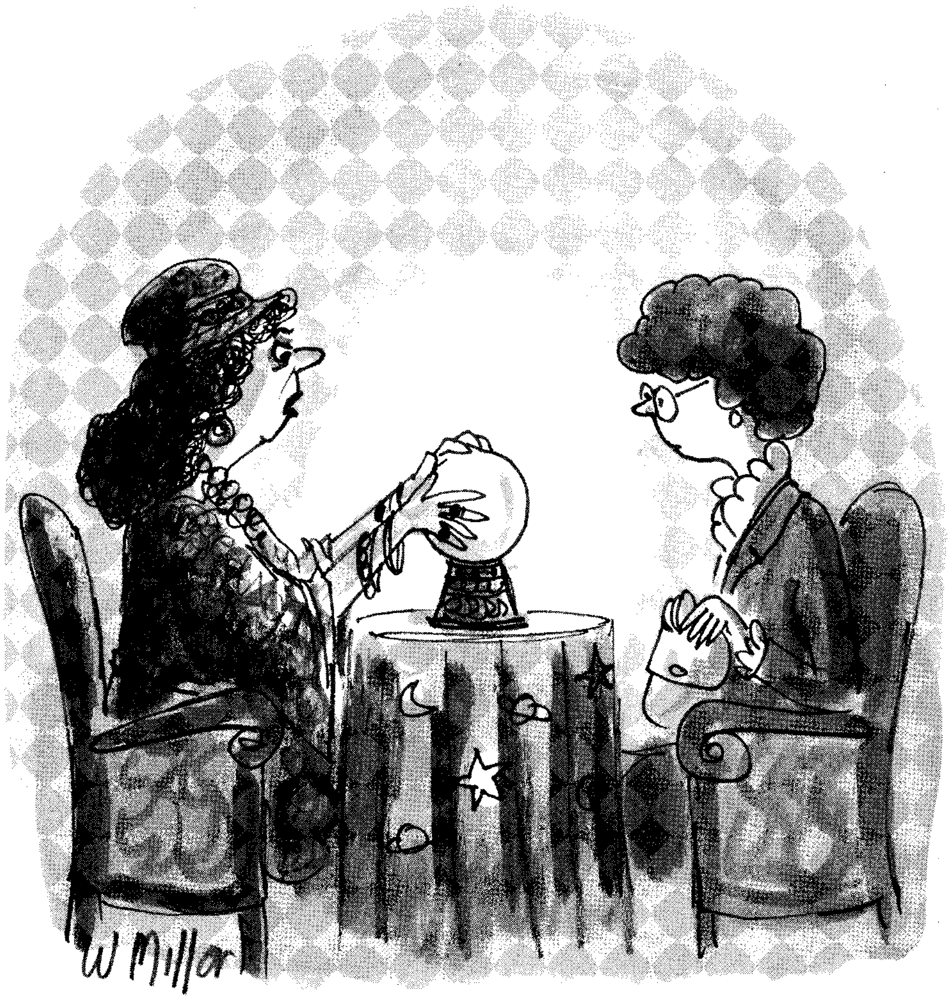
"Looks professional," I said.

"Oh yeah, heck yeah. He was good. He's got D. & H. Reds in there. It's real clean. It's about a thousand per cent clean. He's got so much chrome under the hood you could put the hoses in your bathroom, use 'em for mirrors. I don't know why he's got these tiny wheels up front here, I guess that's a cholo thing . . ." Phil gazed at the Lincoln. He was half fat, maybe forty, with prickly blond hair, doubleknit pants, a short-sleeved white shirt with a spread collar. "Pico cut her himself—know what I'm saying? Build a car like that today cost a fortune." He grinned and held his hands up as if giving me the bottom line. "I figure we're talking six, in the six area."

"What about the Toyota?" I said.

"O.K. Fine. That's all right," he said. "I can work with you on that." He locked an arm around one of mine and gave me a quick pull toward the office. "Let's boot some numbers around."

HIS trailer smelled like Pine-Sol. Everything was covered in knubby fabrics, earth tones. There was a dining booth, a tiny kitchen, a living space with a six-foot ceiling and a bubble skylight. He had four TVs, all consoles and all turned off, lined up against one wall. When we sat down, he said, "Let's verify our situation here. What's your line?" He was shuffling around, looking through a wood-grained-cardboard file cabinet.



"He's tall, dark, and handsome, but he's no genius. Is that O.K.?"

I said, "I'm in sales. Pools, pool accessories, like that. Aboveground stuff. Is that what you mean?"

"Naw. I mean how come you want this car? Is this a kick-out-the-jambs thing for you, or what?" He waited a second, then went on. "O.K., so don't tell me. What's your telephone? I'll check your wife on the deal. You got a wife, don't you?"

"Rita," I said.

"I mean, you tool in Nipponese and want to leave a Flying Burrito Brother, and I don't buy it. What's the better half gonna say? How do I know you got the bucks? How do I know you're in your right mind?"

"I don't know, I do, and I am," I said.

"Ha," he said. "That's good. What's the number? Better gimme the bank, too."

I gave him the numbers. He said, "Great. Get you something in the fridge. I got some Baby Ruths in there, if you got Olympic teeth. Help yourself."

He wiggled out from behind the table, went through a narrow hall to the rear of the trailer, shut a door between that room and the one I was in. There was a Plexiglas panel in the door, so I could see him in there, black telephone receiver to his ear, staring at the ceiling as he talked, swatting his hair with the papers from the file cabinet.

He was only in there a minute. When he came back he said, "The woman's not home, but the bank thinks you're aces." Then he gave me a long look. "Now listen," he said. He reached up under his shirtsleeve to scratch his shoulder. "I'm thinking you don't genuinely want this car. I know I'm supposed to be breaking your leg to sell it, but I figure you got some kind of momentary thing going, some kind of mid-life thing—you look like you're about mid-life."

I shrugged. "Not yet."

"Yet don't matter," he said. "My brother had his at twenty-seven. By twenty-nine he was putting toast in milk during the local news." Phil brushed something off the table. "Tell you what," he said. "I'll rent it. You take it maybe a day or two, leave yours on a collateral basis, take this guy, drive him a couple of days. Then, you still want it, we come to closure. How's that? I don't want you down my throat next week begging to undo the deal, right?"

I said, "I'll rent it right now."

"Sure you will," he said. "And I don't like it, but now and then, hell—what's it hurt?" He started through the file cabinet again. "I got a form here saves my heinie when you go to Heaven in it."

Phil had to go to his house to get the form. He lived right down the street, and he asked me to mind the store while he went, so I sat on the steps of the trailer and watched the highway. Traffic had thinned out a lot. He was gone forty minutes. When he got back I took the Lincoln.

I STOPPED at an Exxon station and filled up with gas, then drove to my office. I had just gotten into my assigned parking space when a young associate of mine, Reiner Gautier, pulled up in the drive behind me.

"What, you went overboard on chimichangas?" he said. "What is that? Where'd you get it?"

"Just trying her out," I said.

"You got a built-in Pez dispenser on there?"

I waved the remark away and pretended to search my briefcase, hoping Reiner would move along. Finally, I had to get out. He'd left his car door open and was giving the Lincoln a careful look.

"That's Mary," he said, pointing to the picture on the side of the car. "She's got wolf trouble there, doesn't she?"

I shrugged. "She'll make out."

He looked at the picture another minute, turning his head back and forth. "That says it all, know what I mean? I like it. I go for this cross-cultural stuff." He walked back toward his car, giving my shoulder a pat on the way.

I let him leave, then got back in the Lincoln and pulled out of my space. I went to the shopping center near the office, stopped in the parking lot, and tried out the lifts. I looked out the door and I was better than eighteen inches off the ground. That got the attention of a black woman who was standing outside the ice-cream store, leaning against one of those phone-on-a-pole phone booths.

She said, "That some kind of trick car?" She was a young woman, in her twenties, and good-looking except that she was snaggletoothed. She was holding a clear plastic shopping bag with yellow rosettes on it.

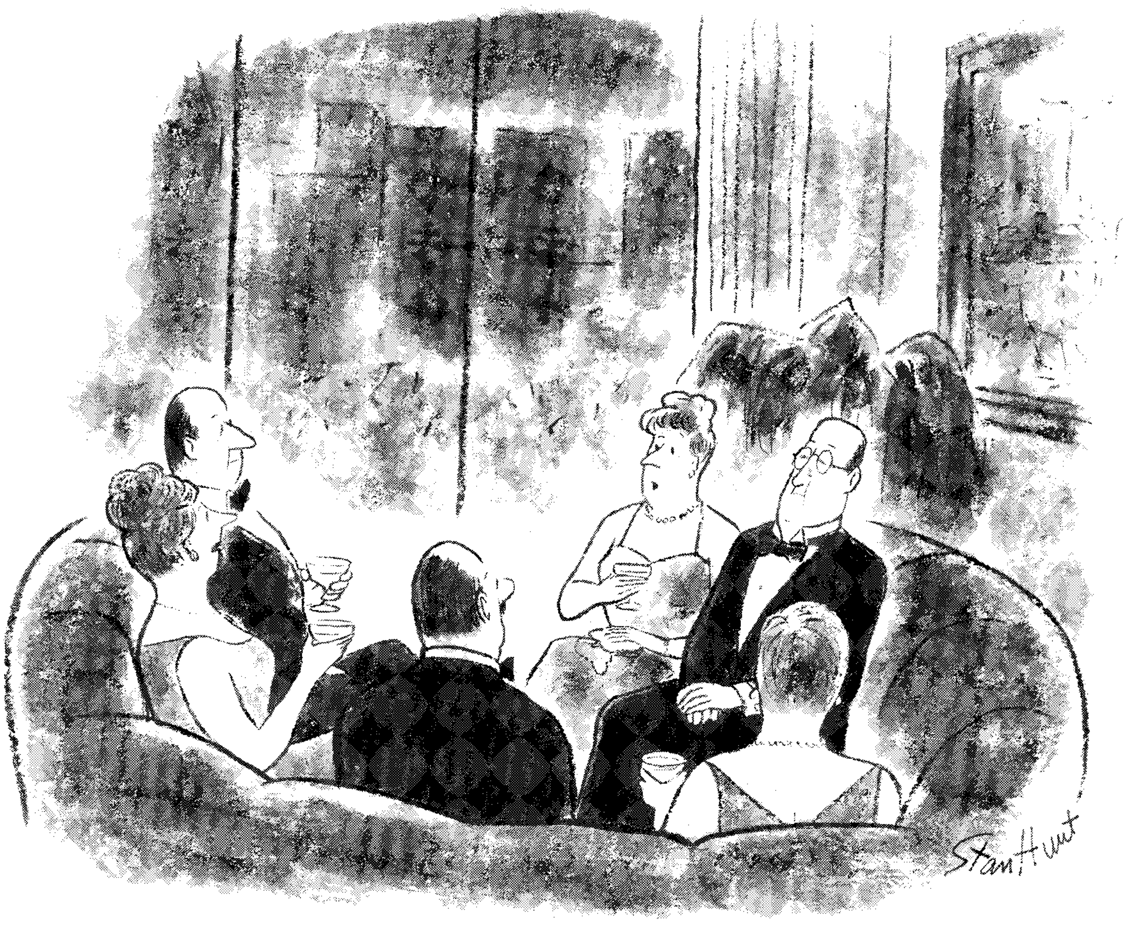
I said, "Yeah. I guess it is."

She looked at me, then at the car, with a kind of amused curiosity, tilting her head back, squinting her eyes as she sized me up. "Well, " she finally said. "What else do it do? Do it dance or anything?"

I grinned at her, shaking my head, then put the car in gear and left. At a bar called Splasher's, which I pass every day on my way back from work, I pulled up and went in for a beer. I'd never been in this bar before. It was one in the afternoon and the place was deserted except for a woman with feathery hair who handed me a wet bottle of Budweiser. She was cleaning up. The ceiling was falling in on this place. The walls were black, and the only illumination came from back of the bar and from the beer signs you always see, the kind that sparkle and throw little dots of light. One sign had a waterfall that light rushed over. I took my beer to a window table so I could watch the car through the stick blinds.

The woman played Country Joe and the Fish on the jukebox. I thought that was amazing. I spun my coaster, listening to this music I hadn't heard in twenty years. Between tunes I went to get a bag of beer nuts from a metal rack next to the cash register. The woman watched me search my pocket for change, then nodded when I put two quarters on the bar.

Two kids on trail bikes stopped outside to give the car a look. These kids were about fourteen, with dirty T-shirts and minimal hair. They straddled their bikes and stared in the car



"It was a terribly moving play. There wasn't a dry eye in the house—unless, that is, you count Hollister."

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windows, and I smiled about it until I saw the kid on the driver's side prying off the door mirror. Then I rapped on the glass and went out. "Hey! Get off of that, will you?"

The kid who had been doing the prying gave me an innocent look. "Great car," he said. "We're checking it out. Right, Binnie?"

Binnie was already on the move, standing on the pedals of his bike, rolling away. "Pretty good," he said. "For a dork-mobile."

I said, "Sorry you're leaving."

"Whoa . . ." he said.

The first kid started moving, too. Then he stopped his bike and turned to me. "Hey," he said. "You know that mirror on your side? It's real loose. I can probably fix it up. Ten bucks."

I gave him a nasty look and shook my head, then got in the car. I stopped at a drugstore on the way home, went in to get cigarettes. A college-age guy with blue eyes and pretty brown hair was in back, sitting at a folding table, eating his lunch. It didn't look like takeout food—it looked homemade. He had a dinner plate, a salad plate, a jelly glass with red and green swirls on the side. There was milk in the glass. He asked if he could help me.

"I need a pack of cigarettes," I said.

He came across to the cigarette counter wiping his mouth with a yellow paper towel. "What kind?"

I said, "True. Menthol."

He looked at his cigarette rack, one end to the other, then turned around and said, "I don't see 'em. You see 'em out there?" He pointed to the front of the counter, where more cigarettes were displayed.

I'd already checked, but I looked again. "None here."

He came out from behind the counter rewiping his mouth. "I don't guess we have 'em. I was sure we did, but I guess I was wrong. I can order you some."

I waited a second or so, looking at the guy, then picked a pack of Kools off the counter. "How about these?"

"We got those," he said.

RITA came to the window when I pulled up in the driveway and honked. It took her a minute, but then she figured out it was me and dropped the curtain. "What's this?" she said, coming out the front door.

I held up a hand and said, "Wait a minute. Stay there. Watch."

She stopped by the gas lamp at the edge of the drive. I jumped the front end of the Lincoln a little, then as far as it would go. Then I raised the rear to full height, then the front. I kept the car up until she was coming for a closer look, then I let it down, left front first, like an elephant getting on its knees in a circus show. That stopped her.

I got out of the car. "How do you like it?"

"Whose is it?" she said.

"Ours." I put an arm around her and did a Phil Kleindienst sweep with my free hand, covering the Lincoln front to back.

"What about the Celica? Where's the Celica?"

I reached in the driver's window and pulled the hood release, so I could show her the chrome on the engine. "Traded it," I said, leading her around to the front. "Guy gave me a whopper deal."

She stopped dead, folding her arms across her chest. "You traded the Toyota?"

"Well, sort of. But this is a killer car. Look at the engine. Everything's chrome. It's worth a zillion."

Rita looked at the sky.

"C'mon," I said. I tugged her arm, leading her to the passenger side, and put her in the car. I went back around, latched the hood, then got in and started the engine. I waited, listening to the idle. "Amazing, isn't it? Can you hear that?"

"The motor? I hear the motor. Is

AT THE ALL-CLEAR

That early in the morning
The village huts were still
Shuttered with silver,
Although, in the headlights,

A young woman appeared
Through an unhinged door
To be rubbing the night's
Sleep from her eyes.

The Red Cross truck was
Parked and driverless
Beside the Protestant
Church; and all along

The beaches the heaped
Debris of plantain
And carapace, seaweed,
And stripped palm fronds

Lay interlapped like
Parquet on the sand.
As our family and
Neighbors came down

From the high ground,
The souring heat unfocussed
The flyspecks floating
In on the tide; and the gulls

Which only the day
Before had been blown
Back off the breakers
Now scavenged along

The shore, above
The dead-water outline
Of the pier. For days
To come, there'd be

A shadow out over
The coral shoals, an
Afterimage, a shard of
Bottle glass pressed flat

In the palm. Our bungalow
Seemed to have been
Pulleyed up from a gash
In the ground: earth-

Spattered, prehistoric,
It stood there staggered
On its shaken stilts . . .
And yet how surprised

We were, each momentarily
Caught as if wondering
What to say at having
Found, inside, that nothing

Had changed, that the table
Was still set for an after-
Noon meal, and there
On the stove was a pot

Of red beans, and another
Of salted rice water.
It could've been
One of those places

We'd run across sometimes
In children's stories,
Where the world's familiar,
While remaining the same,

Will suddenly become
What it has never been,
A place you walk
Through as if in dream:

The air barely rippled
The kitchen curtains
While Mother stood
Washing the unused plates,

While the winged ants beat
Against the light and
Dropped their transparent
Wings on the water.

—SHEROD SANTOS

• •

that what you're talking about, that rumbling?"

We toured the neighborhood, then I started to go downtown, but Rita remembered she needed some lemon-pepper marinade, so we stopped at the supermarket. I sat in the car while she went inside. A lot of people walked by wearing shorts, and all of them looked good.

We picked up a family bucket of fried chicken on the way back, ate most of it in the car, then finished up inside. Then we had bananas and ice cream. After that Rita switched on the VCR and put in a tape. "I want you to see this," she said.

It was a PBS documentary about China—about a peasant family. The grandmother ran things and got carried around on the back of a bicycle through this gorgeous countryside of misty, contoured land. Her son didn't know much about Communism but felt things were a lot better now, with the Four Modernizations. His wife cooked, his daughters helped in the fields, and his son wore a leather motorcycle jacket when he went out to help with the harvest. At the end they cut to the father, alone in some room, sitting by a big vase with thin branches in it, dusty light slanting in. He talked about the family, his voice ricocheting around the high registers while out-of-sync white translations popped on the bottom of the screen. When he got to his son, what he said was that the boy had been "stunned by the West."

That was it. Rita stopped the sound and we watched the credits go by, then the network logo, then some previews of WGBH shows. She poked me and pointed to the *TV Guide*, which was on the coffee table on my side of the couch. I gave her the guide and then watched her look up listings.

When she finished, she tossed the magazine back on the table. "Well?" she said.

"It's a rent-purchase thing," I said. I showed her the paper I'd signed for Phil Kleindienst. "I can give it back any time."

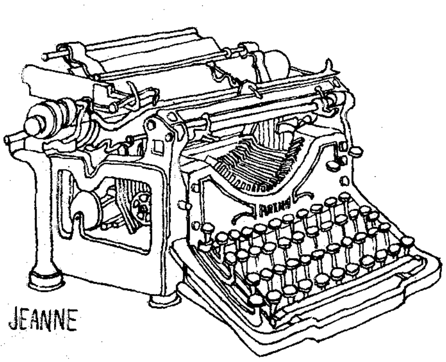
She laughed and said, "Hey! Not so fast. I may love it. I may want to go for a spin."

We went out about ten o'clock. It was cool, so we slouched down in the seats and left the windows open. We went by an apartment project we used to live in, and then we went over to the other side of town, where there is a lot of heavy industry—chemical plants and refineries.

Rita said, "It rides pretty good, doesn't it?"

"It's stiff when it's down," I said.

"So pump her up," she said. "I wonder what it'd be like to keep."



"People would stare."

"Great," she said. "It's about time."

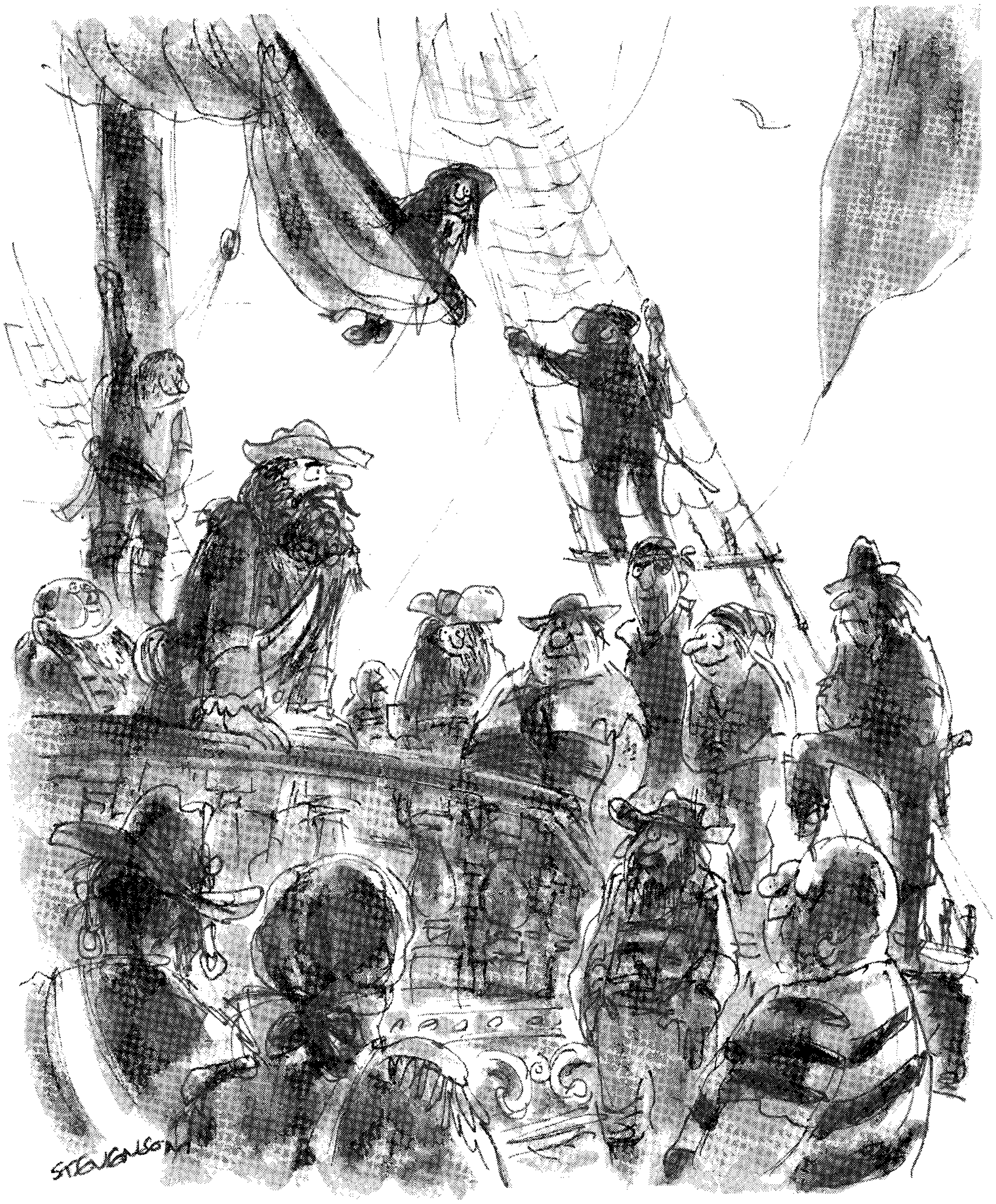
She looked terrific in the car. She had on a checked shirt open over a white Danskin, her feet were up on the dash, and her short hair was wet and rippled with wind. Her skin is olive and rough, and it was glowing as if she were in front of a fire. When I missed a light next to Pfeiffer Chemicals, a couple of acres of pipes and ladders and vats and winking green lamps, I leaned over to kiss her cheek, but she turned at the last minute and caught me with her lips.

"Why, thank you," she said when I sat back again.

"Yes," I said.

On the way home we stopped at the mall. The stores were closed, but there were kids roller-skating in the parking lot, and a couple of cars parked nose to nose under one of the tall lights. We pulled up next to a palm tree in a planter about fifty yards away from the kids.

Rita said, "It's amazing out here, isn't it? How can this place be so good-looking?"



"You'll set sail on the outgoing tide. You'll cruise around the Spanish Main for seventeen days. You'll go ashore at six colorful ports, where you'll tipple, pillage, and decimate."

• •

"Beats me," I said.

She put her head in her hands. "It's awful, but I have a craving for tamales. Really. I'm not making a joke, O.K.?"

One of the kids, a girl in shorts, pointed a finger at us and skated over. "How come it stays up like that?" she said.

"Just magic," I said. But then I opened the door and showed her, letting the car down real easy, then jumping the front a little bit for her.

"You got her now," Rita whispered.

The girl stood back with her hands on her waist for a second. "Boy, " she said.

She was pretty. Her shorts were satin, with little specks of glitter on them, and she had on a tiny undershirt-style top. Some trucks sailed by on the highway. I offered Rita a Kool. She took it and held it under her nose.

"What's your name?" I said to the girl, rolling my cigarette between my fingers.

"Sherri," she said. "With an 'i.' "

I nodded. "You out here a lot?" I wagged my hand toward the other kids, who were sitting on the hoods of their cars watching us.

"Sure," she said. She rocked back and forth on her skates, rolling a little, then stopping herself with her toe. "Make it go up again, O.K.?"

I did that, getting it wrong the first try, so that I had one side up while the other was down. Rita was laughing in a lovely way.

The girl watched, then shook her head. "Boy," she said, smiling and skating two small circles before starting back toward her friends. "You guys were weird."

"Howdy," Rita kept saying all the way home. "Howdy, howdy, howdy. Howdy."

SHE went to bed at one. I couldn't sleep, so I watched a movie we'd rented a couple days earlier. When that was over I rewound it, paged through an issue of *Spin* that she'd picked up at the grocery store, then watched the end of a horror show on HBO. By then it was after four. I tried to sleep but couldn't, so I got up and went outside. It was almost light enough to see out there. I sat in the Lincoln and thought about how nice it was that Rita could just sleep whenever she wanted to. After a while I started the car and went for a drive. I stopped at an off-brand all-night market and bought some liquid refreshment in a sixteen-ounce nonreturnable foam-sleeved bottle. I wondered if the glass was less good than glass in regular bottles.

The scent of countryside in the morning was in the air. The rear window was smeared with condensation, and the storefronts were that way, too, and it was hard to focus on the stoplights, because of the way they made rings around themselves.

I went downtown, and it was like one of those end-of-the-world movies down there, with somebody's red hamburger wrapper skittering across a deserted intersection. The sky was graying. I made a loop around the mayor's Vietnam memorial, then took the highway running west, out past the city limits. The mist got thicker. Close to the road the trees looked right, but farther away they just dissolved. In the rearview mirror I could make out the empty four-lane highway, but above that it was like looking through a Kleenex.

Finally, I turned around and drove back by my secretary's apartment, saw her car with its windows solidly fogged, then passed the mall again. Some overnight campers had turned up in the lot, and their generators were chugging away. There were two Holiday Ramblers, cream-colored, squarish things, and an Airstream hitched to a once green Chevrolet. I pulled in and stopped. The air was so wet you could feel it when you rubbed your fingers together. The sky showed bits of pink behind a gray cloud that was big above the eastern horizon. A bird sailed by in front of the car, six feet off the blacktop, and landed next to a light pole.

These two dogs came prancing into the lot, side by side, jumping on each other, playfully biting each other's neck. They were having a great time. They stopped not far away and stared at the bird, which was a bobwhite and was walking circles on the pavement. They stared, crouched for a second, then leaped this way and that, backward or to one side, then stared more. It was wonderful the way they were so serious about this bird. These dogs were identical twins, black-and-white, each with an ear that stood up and one that flopped over. I made a noise and their heads snapped around, and they stared at me for a minute. One of them sat down, forepaws stretched out in front, and the other took a couple of steps in my direction, looked for a sign from me, then twisted his head and checked the bird.

The dash clock said it was eight minutes to six. I wanted to drive home real fast and get Rita and bring her back to see everything—the dogs, the brittle light, the fuzzy air—but I figured by the time we got back it'd all be gone.

The lead dog took two more steps toward me, stopped, then stretched and yawned.

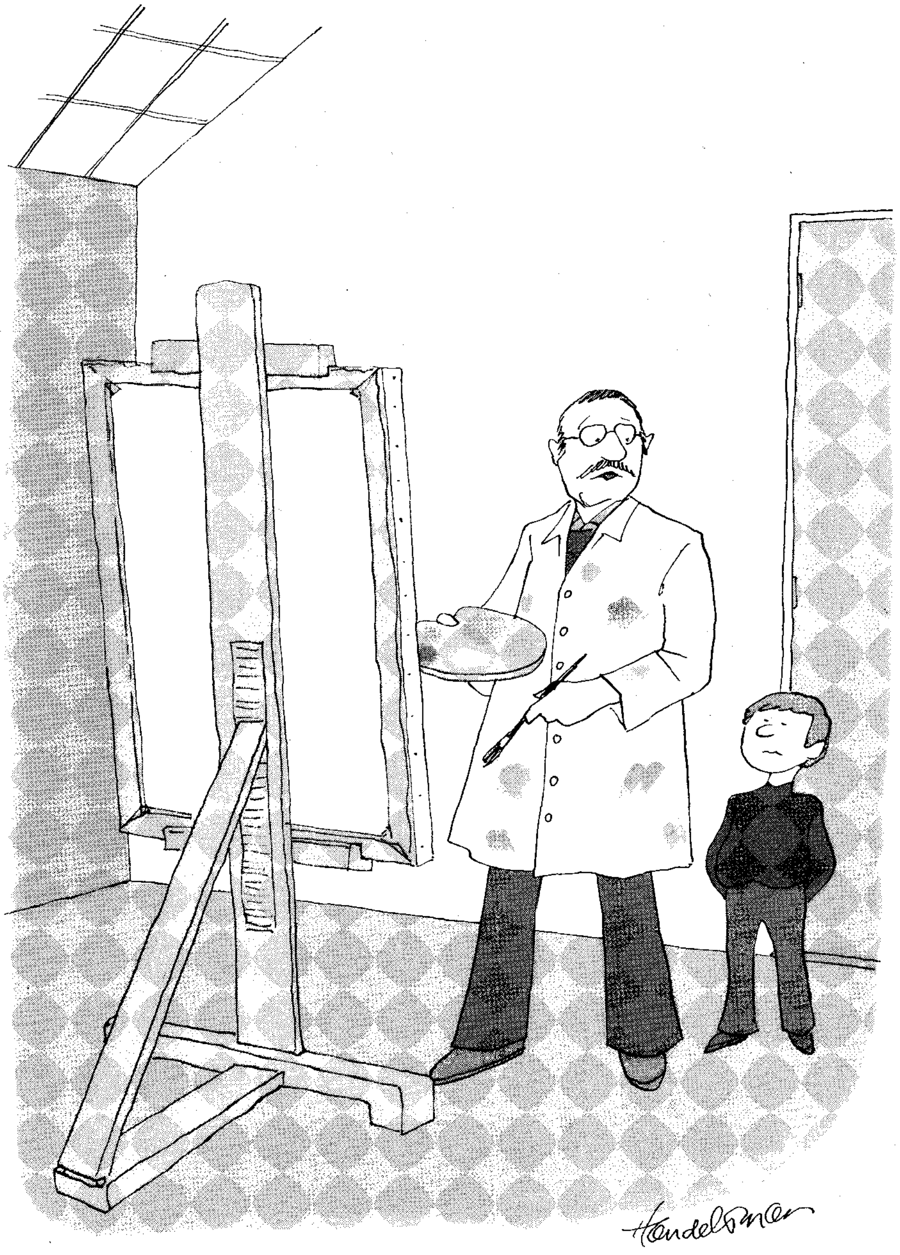
I said, "Well. How are you?"

He wagged his tail.

I said, "So. What do you think of the car?"

I guess he could tell from my voice that I was friendly, because then he did a little spasm thing and came toward me, having trouble keeping his back legs behind his front. I opened the car door and, when he came around, patted the seat. He jumped right in. He was frisky. He scrambled all over the place—into the back seat, back into the front—stuck his head out the passenger window, ducked back in and came over to smell the gearshift knob. The other dog was watching all this. I called him, then put the car in gear and rolled up next to him. He didn't move for a minute, just gave me a stare, kind of over his shoulder. I made that kissing noise you use to call dogs, and he got up and came to the door, sniffing. Finally, he climbed in. I shut the car door and headed home. They were bouncing around, and I was telling them the whole way about the girl in the parking lot and about Rita and me, how weird we had been. "We aren't weird now," I told them. "But we were weird. Once. In olden days."

—FREDERICK BARTHELME



"In your opinion, Rob, have I still got the old sensuality and lyricism?"

•

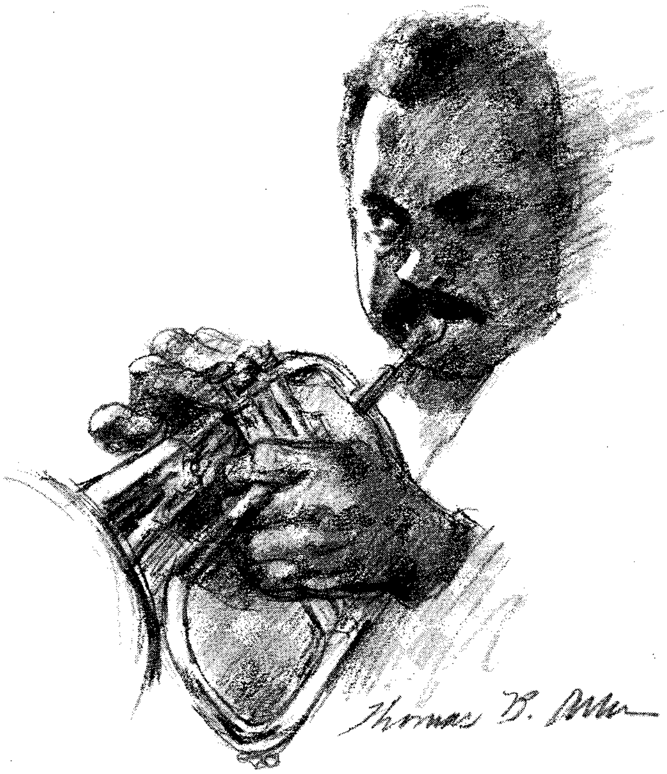
CLEAR DAYS ON THE RETAILING SCENE

[*From the San Francisco Examiner*]

A buyer who is dissatisfied with the equipment can return it and notify the shop, which will refund the money to the seller.

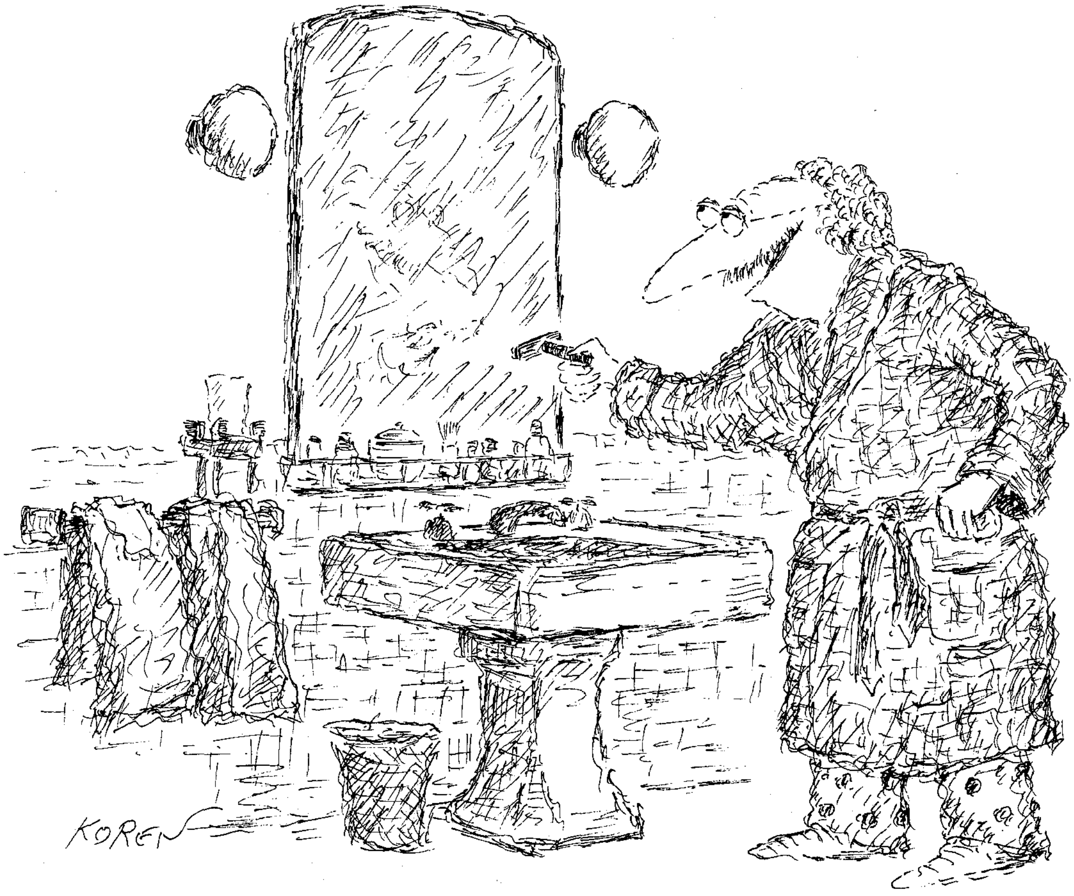
PROFILES

HERE AND ABROAD



THE lucent and eloquent flugelhornist Art Farmer settled in Vienna in 1968, and is one of hundreds of American jazz musicians who have lived abroad during the past sixty or so years. This emigration began in April, 1919, when the Original Dixieland Jazz Band, a stiff ragtimey group from New Orleans, landed in London. Two months later, Will Marion Cook arrived there with his large and impeccable Southern Syncopated Orchestra, which was notable mainly for its single hot soloist—the great clarinettist and soprano saxophonist Sidney Bechet. (Bechet provoked the Swiss conductor Ernest Ansermet to write, "I wish to set down the name of this artist of genius; as for myself, I shall never forget it . . . His [music] is perhaps the highway the whole world will swing along tomorrow.") Between 1925 and 1931, a Philadelphia bandleader named Sam Wooding toured Russia, most of Europe, and parts of South America. He took with him, at various times, the reedmen Gene Sedric, Jerry Blake, and Garvin Bushell, the trumpeters Doc Cheatham and Tommy Ladnier, the trombonist Herb Flemming, and the pianist Freddy Johnson, who in the early thirties taught some of the secrets of jazz to French musicians and to the critics Hugues Panassié and Charles Delaunay. Some of the other jazz musicians who had visited Europe before the twenties were out were the trumpeters Arthur Briggs, Muggsy Spanier, Johnny Dunn, and Henry Goodwin, the clarinettist Buster Bailey, the saxophonists Bud Freeman and Adrian Rollini, and the drummer Dave Tough. (In 1926, the legendary pianist Teddy Weatherford sailed west instead of east, travelling from Chicago to China and eventually ending up in Calcutta, where he died, in 1945.) Brighter and brighter American stars travelled to Europe in the thirties. Louis Armstrong played London in 1932 and 1933, then lolled around Paris, resting his lip. Fats Waller recorded in London, and sat in on the organ at Notre Dame. Duke Ellington went to London in 1933, to great acclaim, and went back in 1939. Coleman Hawkins, already the emperor of the tenor saxophone, arrived in England by himself in 1934 and stayed five years, working his way from his romantic self to the consummate classic self who recorded "Body and Soul" (1939) and "The Man I Love" (1943). Benny Carter landed a year after Hawkins, lent his regal presence to the BBC for a time, and came home in 1938. Lucky Millinder took his big band over in 1933, and it included the trumpeter Bill Coleman, who spent most of the next fifty years in France. In 1937, the trombonist Dicky Wells arrived in Paris, with Teddy Hill's band, and recorded a dozen brilliant numbers, using Coleman and the dazzling Belgian Gypsy Django Reinhardt. Some of the other American jazz musicians who travelled in Europe before the thirties were out were the pianists Herman Chittison, Ram Ramirez, and Joe Turner, the violinist Eddie South, the trumpeters Valaida Snow, Bill Dillard, Bunny Berigan, and Shad Collins, and the drummers Tommy Benford and Kaiser Marshall. Since the Second World War, Europe has been flooded with American musicians. Among those who have stayed there for varying periods are Sidney Bechet, Don Byas, Mary Lou Williams, James Moody, Kenny Clarke, Albert Nicholas, Peanuts Holland, Kansas Fields, Mezz Mezzrow, Bud Powell, Dexter Gordon, Art Taylor, Chet Baker, Stan Getz, Ben Webster, Joe Newman, Johnny Griffin, Slide Hampton, Patti Bown, Idrees Sulieman, Benny Bailey, Ted Curson, Mal Waldron, Tony Scott, Red Mitchell, Kenny Drew, Roswell Rudd, Ernie Wilkins, Richard Boone, Joe Albany, Steve Lacy, Thad Jones, and Art Farmer.

Farmer passes through New York about three times a year, and one afternoon, in a friend's apartment, he talked about his life here and abroad. He recalled New York as it was when he first settled here: "I left Lionel Hampton's band in 1953 and moved into the Maryland Hotel, on West Forty-ninth Street. New York was incredible then—your whole waking life was music. I worked Monday nights at Birdland, and I worked for Lester Young. He called me Pres, which was his nickname, and he called other people Lady, which was short for Lady Day, his nickname for Billie Holiday. He was a very quiet, soft guy. I was late a few times, and he said, 'Pres, the man is getting on me. I don't want to hear any strife. I want everything nice. You dig, Pres?' He even wore soft shoes, and when he finished his solo and moved away from the microphone he moved sideways, and then stayed in one spot bouncing up and down in time. One night, he leaned over and said, 'Pres, there are two ladies out there shooting me down. They don't realize that I just want to go home after work.' Of course, he had his own language. 'Take another lung' meant take another chorus, and 'the George Washington' was the bridge of the



"You'd make a formidable enemy."

tune. He was still playing beautifully. Every note meant something, and when I followed him I felt like a fool if I didn't make sense. He made me tighten up and tell a 'story' in each solo. He always said a soloist should tell a story. When I wasn't working, Miles Davis would rent my horn for ten dollars a night. His was pawned, I guess. I'd go wherever the gig was—Hackensack or Brooklyn, or wherever—to make sure he didn't pawn mine. Sometimes he'd come around when I *was* working and give me a hard time: 'Man, you're supposed to rent me that horn.' 'Miles, I'm working.' 'Man, you always rent me that horn for ten dollars.' 'Miles, I have a gig.' And on and on. In 1956, I joined Horace Silver's first quintet, and stayed for a year or two. Then I went with Gerry Mulligan's quartet, which was a shock. Silver is a strong piano player whose accompanying pushes you this way and that, and to suddenly find yourself in a pianoless group was like walking down the street naked. There was nothing between you and the ground except the bass line and Mulligan's occasional backup riffs. I did a lot of avant-garde stuff on the side during this period—with Teddy Charles and Teo Macero and George Russell. I got the reputation of being able to play anything, so when the music was on the verge of being abstract they'd call me. I recorded for Blue Note and Savoy and Columbia and Prestige and ABC-Paramount. I worked with Thelonious Monk, and I worked with Coleman Hawkins. I recorded for Jackie Gleason. In 1959, Benny Golson and I put together our Jazztet, with Curtis Fuller on trombone and McCoy Tyner on piano. We never got to a very successful point commercially, but the group stayed together off and on about three years. In the early sixties, Jim Hall and I had a quartet, with Steve Swallow on bass and Pete La Roca on drums. Jim is amazing. I could go in and out of the chords, up and down the chords, and he instantly knew what to do. Whatever I played, he was there. By the middle sixties, rock was beginning to be felt, and the bottom was falling out of jazz in New York. The only place someone like me could get work was at Slugs', in the East Village, or the Five Spot, on Third Avenue, or maybe out in Brooklyn. There were also a few places in Boston and Baltimore and Chicago. But that was it. Eddie Bert, the trombonist, told me about the pit bands, and I ended up in Elliot Lawrence's band in 'The Apple Tree,' on Broadway. I had gone to Europe several times in the early sixties, and in 1965 Friedrich Gulda, the Viennese pianist, asked me to be one of the judges of an international competition of young jazz musicians. It took place in Vienna, and while I was there I heard about a radio jazz orchestra that was being formed. They needed a trumpet soloist, and the job was for ten days a month nine months of the year. Considering the way things were here and that my whole life had been lived for the possibility of playing jazz music, I decided to give it a try for a year. It worked pretty well, and in 1968 I gave up my apartment on Twentieth Street and moved to Vienna."

Farmer's face is big and square, and he has large, wide-set eyes and a long, rectangular mustache. His narrow shoulders fly out at right angles from his neck and form one of the narrow sides of the rectangle that is the rest of him. He has beautiful large hands with long, squarish fingers, and his deep, hidden voice sounds as if it were coming from a cave. He is a careful speaker, and his words pass in review as they are released. He is in very good shape. A year or two ago, he took off thirty pounds, and a couple of years before that he quit smoking and drinking. He used to think he couldn't play without drinking; now he couldn't play and drink. It took him a long time to become a first-rate jazz musician. This, he said, is how he began:

"I was born August 21, 1928, in Council Bluffs, Iowa. There were three of us—my sister, Mauvolene, who is two years younger, and my twin brother, Addison, who was born an hour after me. Addison became a bass player, and he died in New York very suddenly of an aneurism in 1963. I still dream of him. We're sitting

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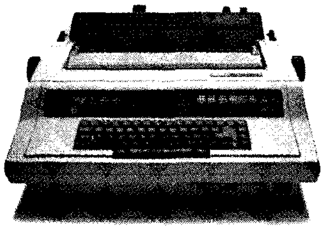

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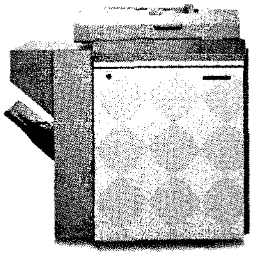

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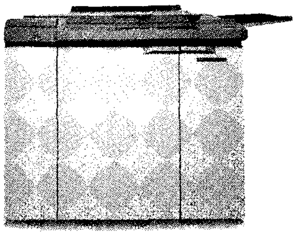

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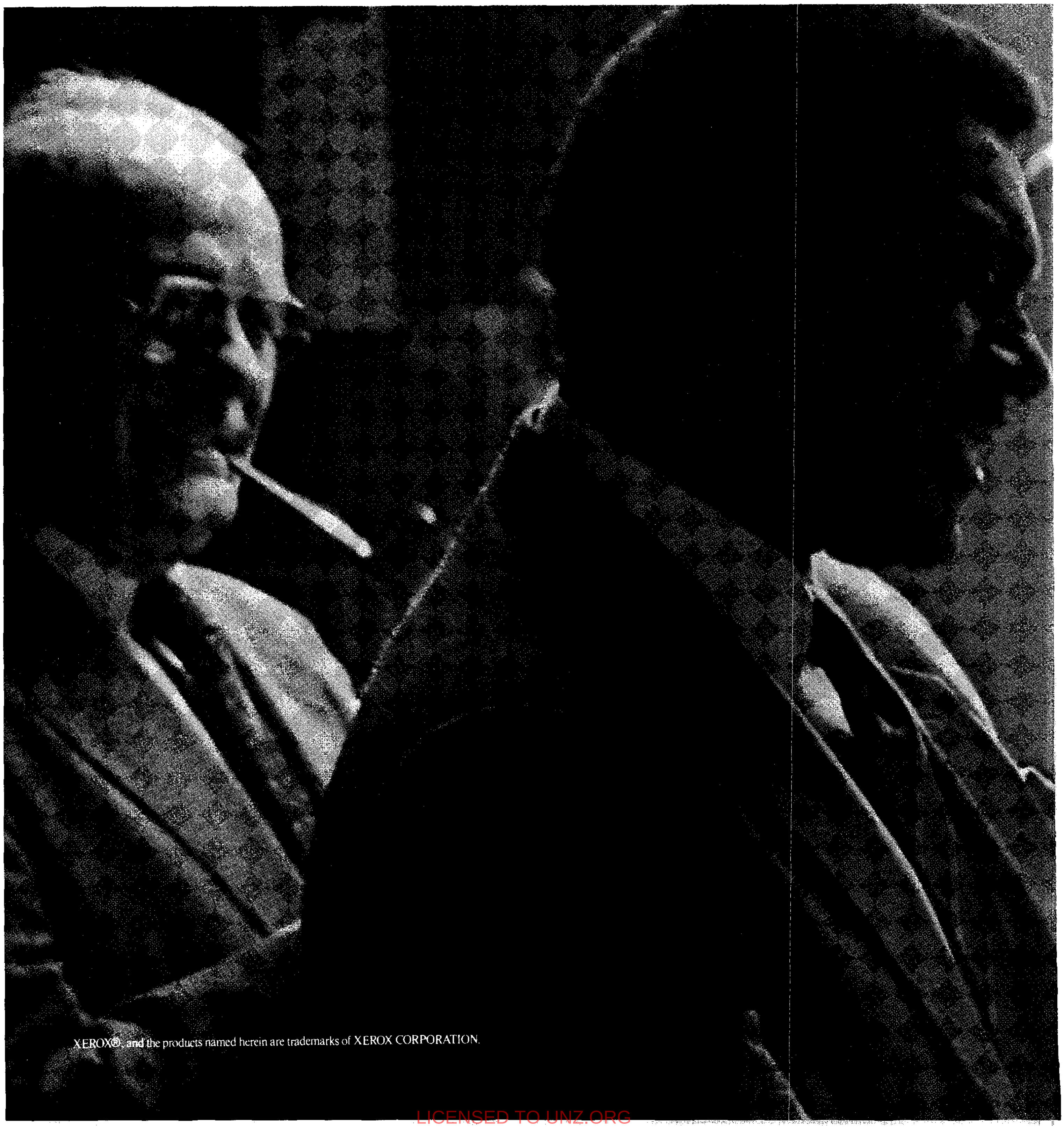

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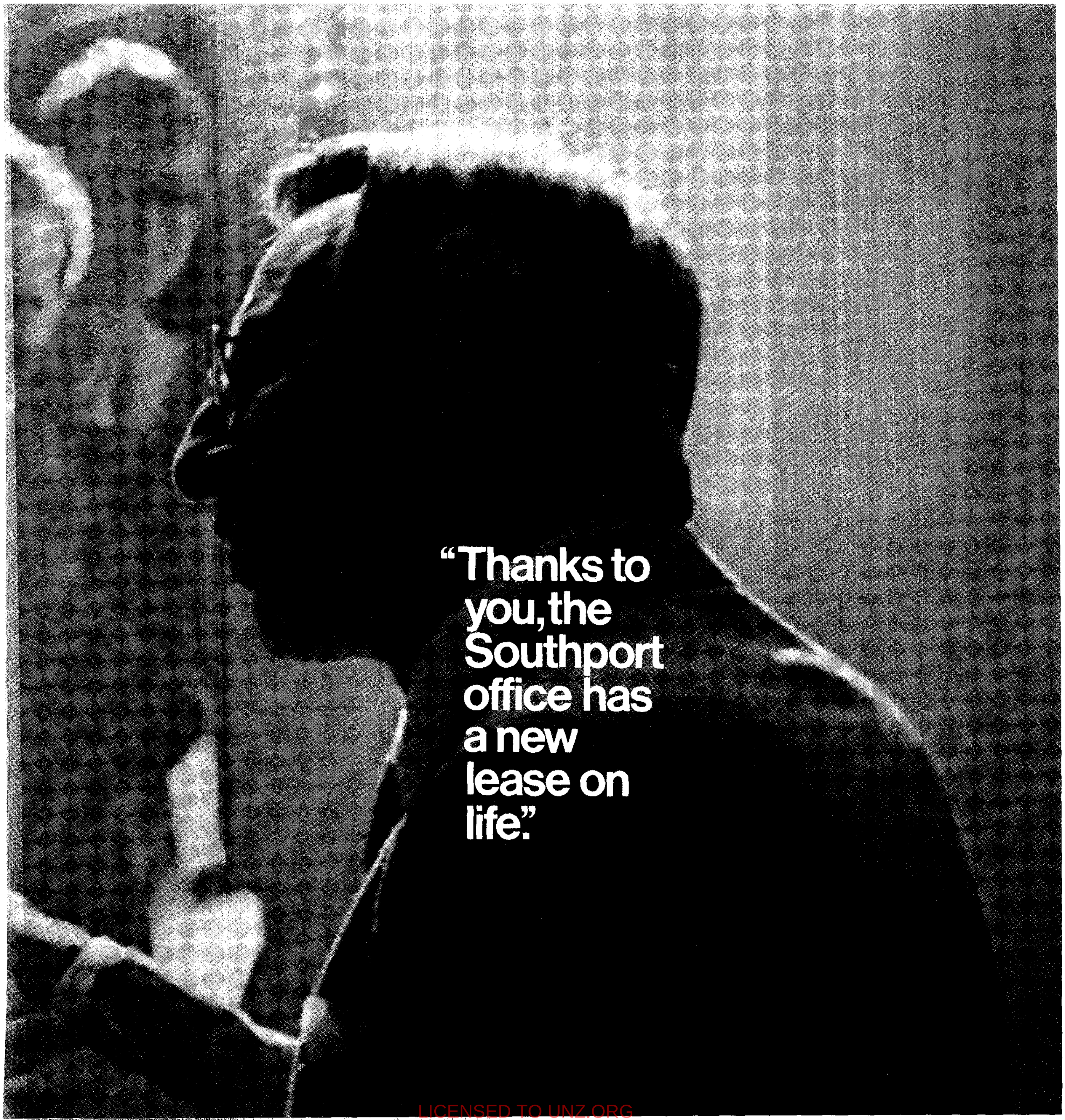
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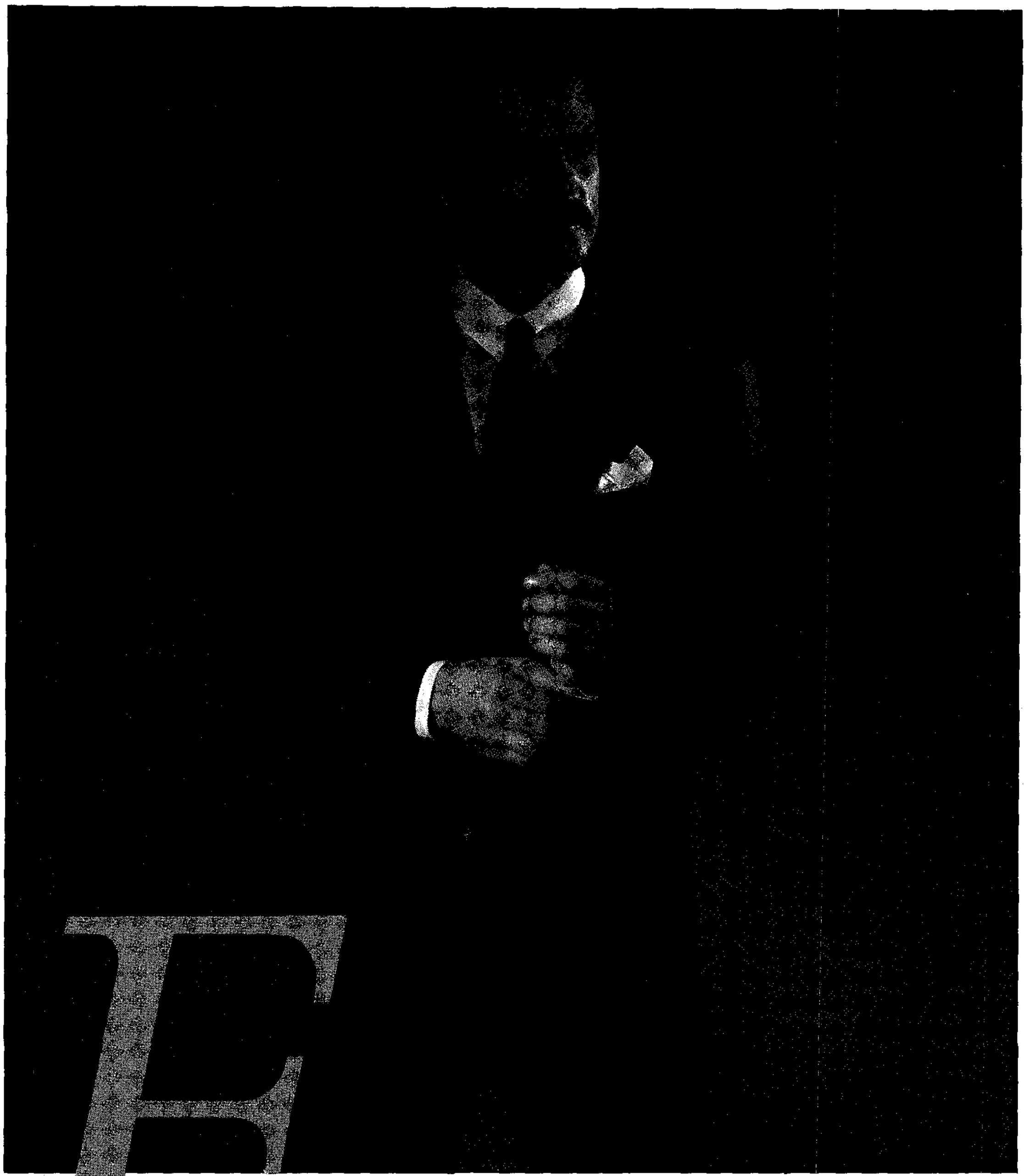

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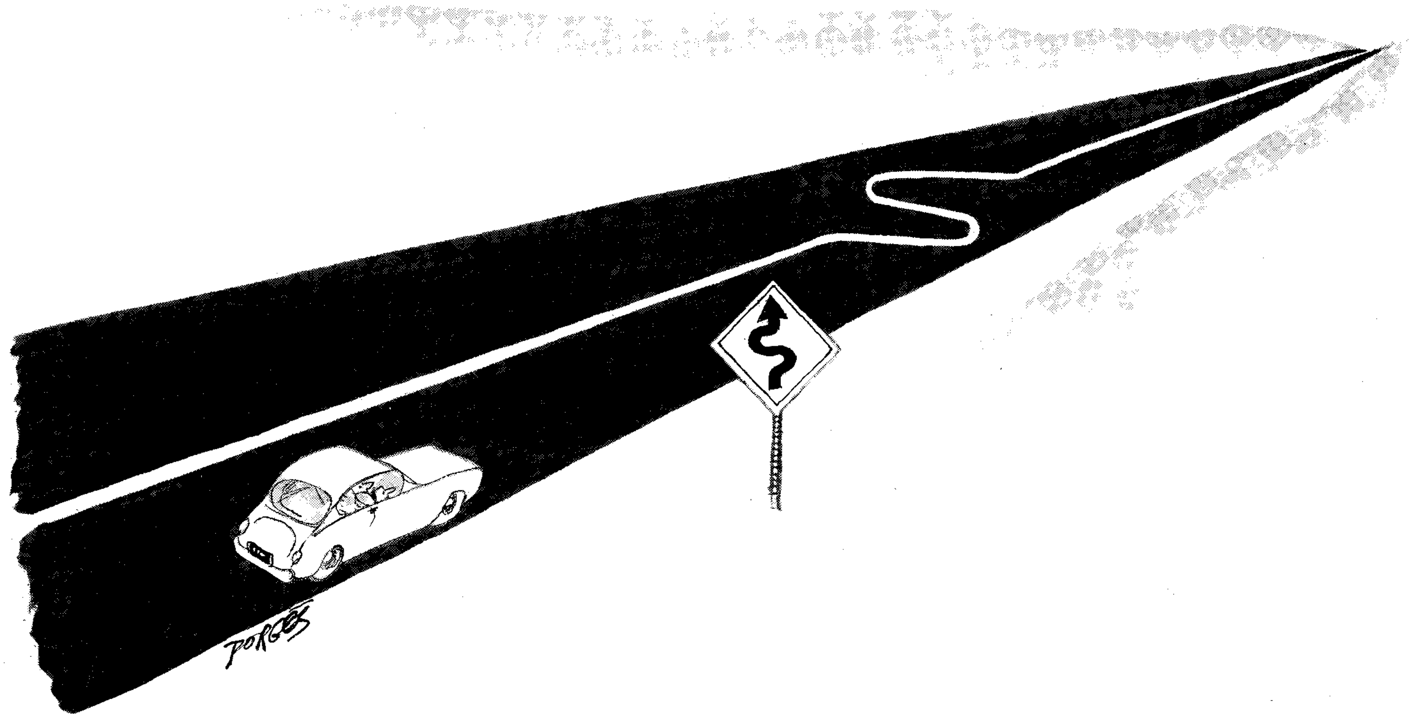

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together and talking, and everything is the way it was. It seems there's a part of him I haven't fully gotten over. My father was James Arthur Farmer, but I have very little memory of him. He and my mother were divorced when I was four, and he died not long after in a steel-mill accident. Around this time, we moved with my grandparents to Phoenix. We moved there because my grandmother suffered from asthma. My grandfather was a minister in the African Methodist Episcopal Church—the A.M.E.—and we lived in the parsonage. He died when I was eight. I recall that he was very lively and agile. He could hold a broomstick parallel to the floor and jump over it. My grandmother was the first black woman to graduate from an institute of higher learning in Iowa, and she started a night school in Phoenix for blacks. She was part Blackfoot Indian—her mother, who had supposedly escaped a massacre, was all Blackfoot. My mother's name was Hazel Stewart, and she was born in Cincinnati. She was short and a little darker than me, and she was very strong. She was also kind and even. She was quite solid in form, but got thinner and smaller as she got older. She played the piano and sang gospel in church. I'd go to the church with her when she practiced, and when she was finished I'd get on the stool and play. My family was full of doctors and lawyers and teachers and ministers, and most of them played music for a hobby. One was a professional—Kenneth Stewart, a cousin of my mother's, who played trombone in Chicago in the thirties with Earl Hines and Sammy Stewart. A cousin born the same day I was took up the horn, but he got the call and gave it up.

"I went through grammar school and the first three years of high school in Phoenix. I started the piano in grammar school and, a little later, took up violin. A tenant we had gave me a violin he had in his trunk. He said to hold the neck of the violin just as if you were picking a pear from a tree. I got so I could play 'Humoresque' and 'Minuet in G.' Then I joined a marching band run by a Catholic priest named Emmett McLoughlin. I had played some bugle for flag ceremonies at school, so they gave me a sousaphone—it surprised me, because it had a mouthpiece as big as a coffee cup. I played that for a year; then they switched me to cornet. I had the mistaken idea that the cornet would be as easy as the tuba, but then I thought I had already mastered the piano and the violin and the tuba. So my ego wouldn't let me put it down. The school system in Phoenix was segregated, and there was no one in our environment who could give me lessons. All the lady in charge of music in our high school ever said to me was 'You play more wrong notes than anyone I ever heard.' I did teach myself to read music pretty well, and when I was about fifteen I joined a high-school dance band led by a tenor-saxophone player named Wesley Dotson. We used stock arrangements taken from Basie and Ellington and Lunceford, with the solos written in. We heard the big bands that came through on one-nighters—Tiny Bradshaw, Erskine Hawkins, Lunceford, Harlan Leonard, Artie Shaw. Shaw arrived for his gig a day ahead, and he had Barney Kessel and Roy Eldridge with him. We were playing in some little joint, and Roy sat in on drums. Later, he played trumpet with us. I was too ignorant to appreciate how great he was. The trumpeters I listened to were Harry James and Dud Bascomb, who was with Erskine Hawkins. We also heard the 364th Infantry Regiment dance band at the Papago Park army base, near Phoenix. George Kelly, the tenor player with the Savoy Sultans, was in it, and he'd come by our rehearsals. Once, he wrote out an arrangement of Duke Ellington's 'Azure' for us. He was a kind man. But I have never yet heard an older musician tell a younger musician who asked for help, 'Go away. You're bothering me.' Our average age in the band was sixteen or seventeen, but we had ambitions to go on the road, and when Jimmy Lunceford came through we managed to meet him and he gave us the name of a booking agent in Los Angeles. We

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wrote him, but he never answered. By this time, I knew I had to be in jazz. Two things decided me—the sound of a trumpet section in a big band and hearing a jam session. I had to be a part of those two things, and nothing else in life was that attractive.

"The summer after the third year of high school, Addison and I went to Los Angeles to look around, and we got involved in so many things we decided to stay. We met Hampton Hawes and Sonny Criss and Eric Dolphy. Our mother said, 'All right, but I want you to finish high school.' We got a room and enrolled in Thomas Jefferson High. The big bands were still going, but a lot of the best players were in the service, so we were able to get jobs we ordinarily couldn't have gotten. We went with Horace Henderson and Floyd Ray and Jimmy Mundy. Between times, we worked in a cold-storage warehouse, stacking crates of Idaho potatoes. Sometimes there was no work of any kind, but it was 'If we don't eat today, what the hell—we'll eat tomorrow.' We met Charlie Parker. I can't remember a bad experience with him. He always paid Addison back when he borrowed money. He'd stay here, there, everywhere. He slept on our couch for a while. He and Addison and I would walk up Central Avenue and wangle our way into movies that were half over, and one time we stopped at an after-hours place called Lovejoy's, and Bird sat in with this real poor piano player. I told him later that I was surprised he had done that, and he said, 'You take every opportunity you can.' I made my first trip to New York with the drummer Johnny Otis, who had a big band at the Club Alabam in Los Angeles. We were on the same bill at the Apollo Theatre with Louis Jordan and His Tympany Five. Jordan was very big then, and we were doing seven or eight shows a day. I had developed bad musical habits. I was using the strong-arm method, jamming my horn into my lip to get high notes, and I was making a terrible hole in my lip. I was playing fourth trumpet, and at the end of the first week I could no longer get a sound out of the horn, and Otis had to let me go. Everybody hung out on a corner of a Hundred and Twenty-sixth Street and Eighth Avenue, and the trumpet player Freddy Webster told me I should take some lessons from a teacher named Maurice Grupp. I took one, and told him I had to go home, because I didn't have any

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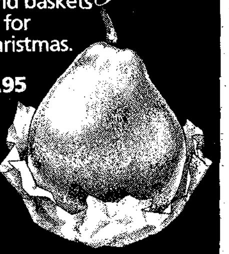

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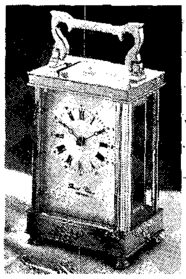

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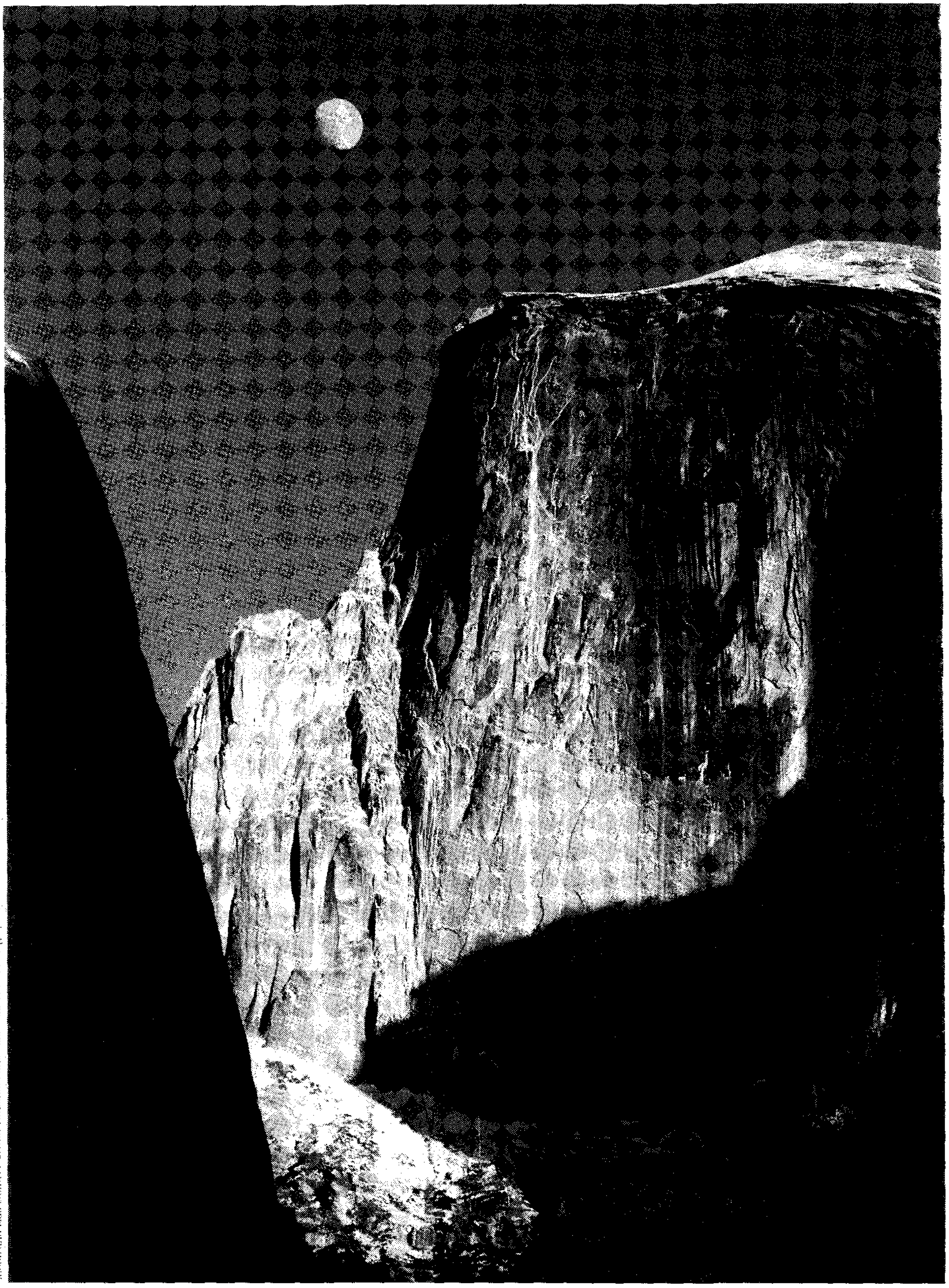

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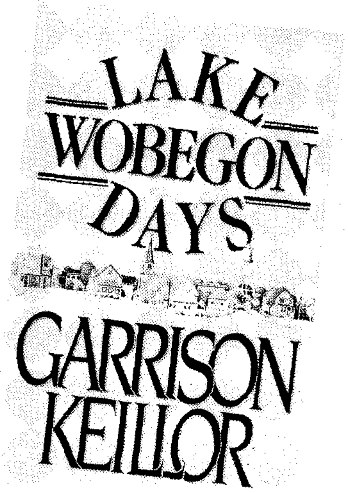

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money. He said it was essential for me to stay and continue lessons. I got a job as a night janitor at the Alhambra Theatre. I made twenty-four dollars a week. The lessons were eight dollars, and my room, at a Hundred and Twenty-ninth between Seventh and Lenox, was six. Grupp's studio was on Seventh Avenue in the Forties, and after I'd been to him I'd hang out in the jazz clubs on Fifty-second Street. I met Dizzy Gillespie, and he said he was looking for a trumpet player who could play a real singing lead in his big band, and was I interested? He had John Lewis and Ray Brown and Milt Jackson, and I sat in for three or four nights. Dizzy told me after the last night that he was sorry but the guys in the band thought I was not quite ready. A job opened up with Jay McShann, and we toured all over the South and the Southwest before ending up in Los Angeles.

"Young black musicians caught hell in Los Angeles in the late forties and early fifties. White musicians had the work at the few clubs sewed up, and it wasn't easy getting into the studios, even if you were good enough, which I wasn't. I was scuffling, real hard. I was a hotel janitor and a file clerk at County General Hospital. But I still managed to play with all sorts of people—Benny Carter and Gerald Wilson and Dexter Gordon and Wardell Gray. Wardell, who'd been with people like Benny Goodman, was a big brother to me. Then Lionel Hampton came through, and I was offered a job, even though he already had five trumpet players. Wardell told me I'd be making a mistake if I took it—that they didn't play anything but 'Flyin' Home' and 'Hamp's Boogie-Woogie.' But Lionel was a gift to young musicians, and I learned things in that band I couldn't have learned anywhere else. Also, night after night Hampton played things himself that turned me around. Clifford Brown was in the band, and Quincy Jones and Gigi Gryce and Alan Dawson. There was a brotherly spirit, and we laughed a lot at the crazy things Hampton did. At the Band Box in New York, he had us dressed in shorts, and part of our act was to march out to the street, playing. One night, he tried to march us into Birdland, which was next door, but the doorman wouldn't let us in. We went to Europe in the summer of 1953, and when Hampton found out that a bunch of us had made some records on a Swedish label he blew up and told us that we'd get thrown out of the union and that he'd take our passports and our tickets home—all of which was nonsense. Another time, he got mad about something and he walked up and down the aisle of our bus for at least half an hour cursing each of us out. Then suddenly he said, 'Good night, boys,' sat down, and went to sleep."

FARMER's style is spare, lyrical, logical. It is descended from Fats Navarro and Miles Davis, and perhaps it has been tinted by such older trumpeters as Emmett Berry and Shorty Baker. It is built on silence. The silences may occur three or four times in a solo and will last from one to three beats. They gather what has come before, and prepare us for what is to come. They let Farmer's improvisations breathe, and they let us breathe. His style is also built on his tone, which has always been rich, even impenetrable. It has been even richer since he switched from the trumpet to the flugelhorn, twenty-three years ago. The flugelhorn resembles a large cornet and sounds like a deep, soft trumpet. Some flugelhornists seem to sink into their own sound, but Farmer has lost none of his agility and sharpness of attack. Indeed, he is more agile than he was twenty years ago, and so has run counter to the usual jazz brass player's progress from youthful floridity to middle-aged compression. He has no vibrato, and his notes emerge measured and almost clipped. He likes big intervals and will easily jump or fall an octave. He likes to repeat phrases, changing a note or two each time, and he likes to enliven things with quick, slanting interior runs and occasional upper-register blasts. He is a gentle, highly melodic player whose solos, with their steplike phrasing and sotto-voce passages (he has a sharp sense of dynamics), suggest sunlight on water: the blue light from the sky is the original melody, the reflected light his improvisation.

Farmer talked about his playing: "You have to learn how to use your strength properly if you are a brass player. You have to get your energy *into* the horn. It is not a question of the size of the player or his air capacity. You have to use your stomach muscles so that all the air gets squeezed into that tiny hole in the

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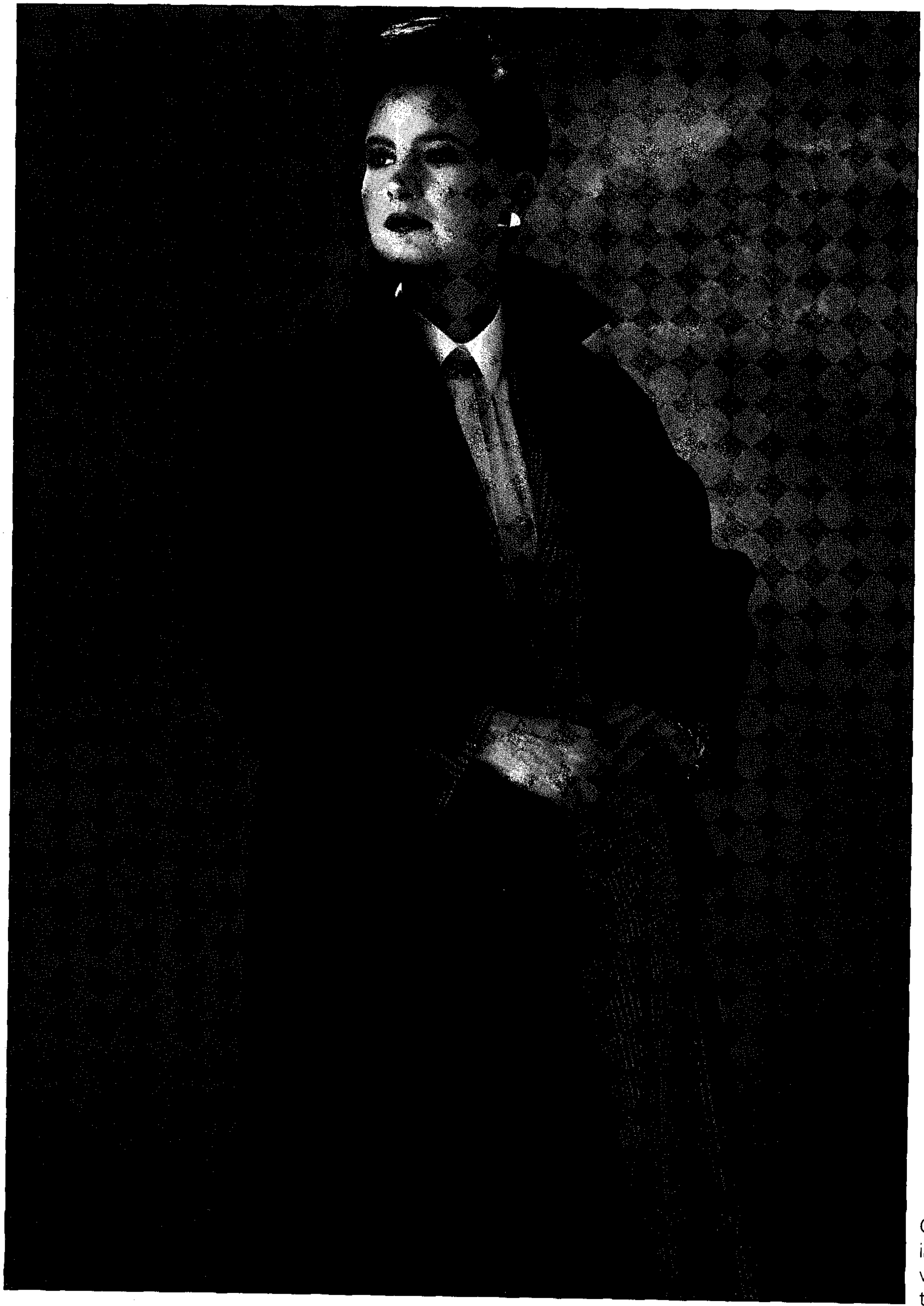

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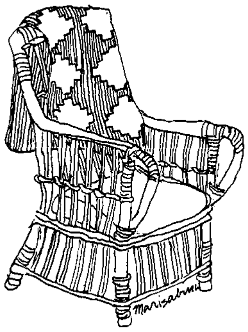
mouthpiece, and none of it leaks out the side. That's the most important thing about playing a brass instrument, and once you solve it you can go on to the nuances. Good tone is based in part on the size of the mouthpiece. A lot of young trumpeters use a shallow mouthpiece, which gives them a penetrating sound and makes it easier to hit high notes. A deep mouthpiece gives you a broad, warm sound, but you have to build up the muscles around your mouth to get the high notes. I switched to the flugelhorn to get the right sound. Before, I was hung up all the time trying to get that sound out of my trumpet, and ignoring everything else. Of course, you can go a little crazy on the subject of tone. I have a friend who collects trumpets and flugelhorns, and sometimes I go to his place and try different mouthpieces with different horns, and pretty soon I don't know how anything sounds. So many things go into good tone—the amount of air you put into the horn, the mouthpiece, the condition of your embouchure, the way you feel, and certainly the place you're playing in. A good room or good hall can be an extension of the horn. A bad room or hall can wipe everything out.



"When I was learning to improvise, I'd take solos by Dizzy Gillespie or Fats Navarro off records and place them against the chords to see what they were doing. Now you can go into a music store and buy books of transcribed solos, and your work is done for vou. My goal is not to think about the chords of a tune at all—have them second nature, have them stored in my bones. But this gets more and more difficult, because chords seem to have more and more notes. Also, the tunes that people write now come in all kinds of weird shapes—forty bars or fifty or ninety-six, and the bar lengths may be uneven. I rarely know what I'm going to do in a solo more than a measure or two ahead, and what I do may be inspired by a note the bassist plays or by some figure the drummer gets off. You can never force what you're doing. The harder you try, the less happens. At the best times, it's as if you had been taken over by some other power. This power plays you, and you become the instrument. There are dangers everywhere in improvisation—cracked notes, forgetting a chord, having the bassist or drummer play something you don't like, hearing a loud conversation. All these things can be like a slap in the face. Of course, totally pure improvisation is very rare. Most solos are made up of old elements newly arranged. This is true of even the masters. I worked opposite Louis Armstrong once, and after the first few nights I discovered he played almost the same solo on the same songs night after night. But he somehow made the solo sound new each time. When I'm home, I practice four or five hours a day. I start with exercises aimed at the problems of range, endurance, sound. Then I do intervals and scales. Then I play songs, sometimes by myself, sometimes with tapes. I warm up for an hour before a gig. Your horn has to be warmed up, your body has to be warmed up, your lips have to be vibrating a certain way. If the horn has that proper singing sound, it leads to good things, to good improvisation. It opens your mind to creativity.

"I have a special soundproof room in my house in Vienna to practice in. I live with my wife, Mechtilde Lawgger, and our thirteen-year-old son, Georg. We live in a kind of row house that we built. It's in the city proper, in one of the green belts near the beginning of the Vienna Woods. It is very green, very desirable. If someone asks me where I live and I say the Eighteenth District, they say, 'Oh, *ja, ja.* Good air, good air.' The schools in Vienna are excellent, and I would never move Georg here, because of that. He doesn't get home until five or six every night, and then he has a couple of hours of homework. My wife helps him, or else he would never be able to keep up. Vienna has an element of stability that I think has improved me as a musician. I lead a very quiet life there. I'm an introvert and kind of reclusive, and I'm perfectly content to stay at home. I play in three or four different clubs in Vienna. I work with local rhythm sections in England and Brussels and Holland and Paris and Switzerland. The pay has improved, and is just about equal to what you get here. The people who go to jazz clubs in Europe tend to be more informed than they are in America. They come to hear you only if they like you, and they listen. The only drunk I can remember was in a Swedish club. They removed him once, twice, and the third time they took him and his chair outside. That did it, because the place was packed and there wasn't an extra chair in the house. I'm in Vienna about a third of the year, and the rest of the time I'm on the road—in Europe, in the United States, in Japan. Vienna is full of chauvinism. There is a common feeling that if something doesn't happen in Vienna it's not worth happening at all. There are more songs about the glories of Vienna than about any other city in the world. And everybody has a title, a rank. If you have two doctorates, you are called Doktor Doktor. These titles are put right on the mailboxes. I have no title, but I am very well known, and I feel I have the respect of the people.

"I have not had a single bad racial experience since I have been in Europe. No one has been rude, no one has ignored me, as people will do here if they don't want to serve you or sell you a ticket, or whatever. There has never been the slightest trouble with hotels or restaurants, although there is now a slight surliness in the air in London. Sometimes people stare at you in remote Austrian towns, but they stare at you the same way they would stare at a car they had never seen before. It is always something of a shock to come back here, because nothing has changed much. The same hangups are there. A person who plays jazz can go anywhere else in the world and never feel like a stranger. There are always people who know who you are even if they have never heard you. There are always people who want you to feel at home, who want to do things for you. I can play the tiniest European town and be recognized. In an American town of the same size, or even in a good-sized American town, I would be unknown."

—Whitney Balliett

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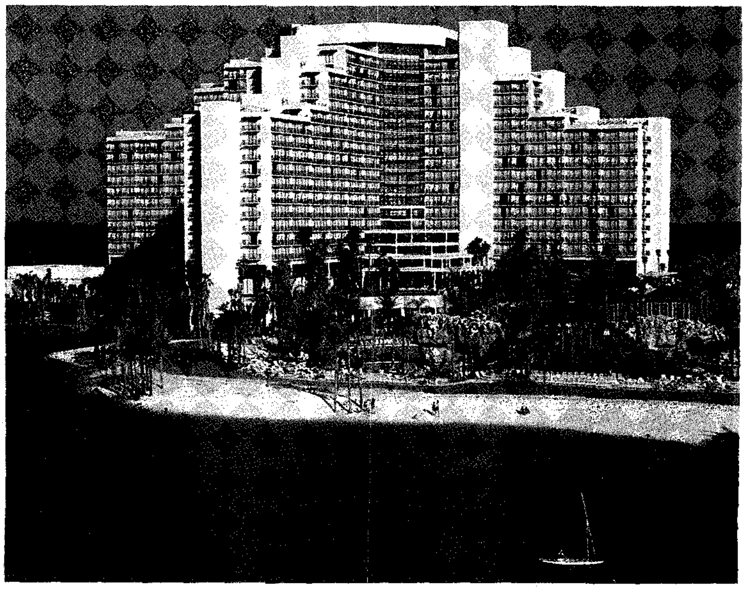

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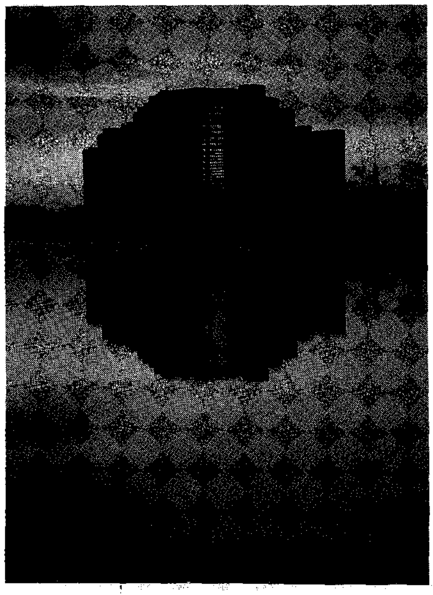

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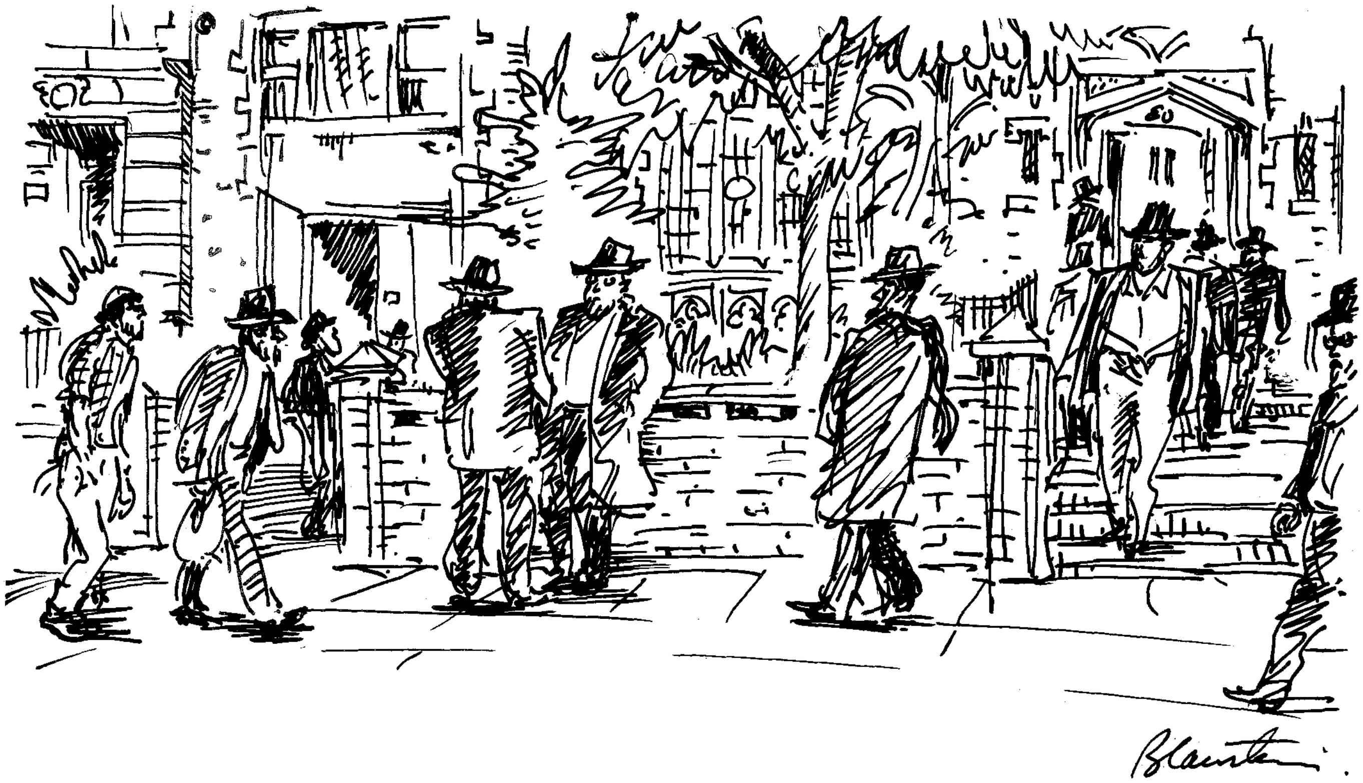

IN the eighteenth century, the most famous center for traditional Torah study was the Lithuanian city of Vilna, and its undisputed leader was the stern and widely admired Gaon (a Hebrew epithet meaning Great Scholar), Rabbi Elijah ben Solomon. Vilna was also the center of the rabbinical opposition to the new pietistic movement known as Hasidism, and the Gaon was the opposition's most vituperative spokesman. Hasidism was attracting followers from every corner of Eastern Europe, among them some of the most promising students of the day. These intellectuals and teachers were drawn by the mystical ideas of the movement's founder, Rabbi Israel ben Eliezer—he was known as the Baal Shem Tov (Master of the Good Name), or Besht—and they brought Jewish mysticism to the masses in graspable form, for the first time in Jewish history. Without their presence, it is doubtful whether the movement would have gone anywhere—a fact that is frequently glossed over in histories of Hasidism. While the Besht's great rapport with the humble and unlettered is rightly stressed, and it is true that many a shoemaker and tailor came to hear him preach, there is little basis for the widely held belief that the Hasidim were some kind of early flower children. The Besht did not exclude scholars from his circle; he merely made room in it for the non-scholar. Nor were his followers drawn only from the ranks of the desperate and displaced; many of them, according to Rabbi Jacob Joseph of Polonnoye, a disciple who wrote down a number of the Besht's sayings and eventually (in 1780) published them, had "relatively stable social positions," which they put at risk by adopting the Besht's ideas.

The Besht is regarded as the prototype of the *tzaddik*, or "righteous man"—someone who, as one religious source puts it, "has reached the ideal of communion in the highest degree and therefore appears before God as 'one of His own.' " The great Hasidic leaders have all been considered *tzaddikim*, who mediated between God and more ordinary mortals to help them obtain earthly blessings and guide them toward a more spiritual life. The Kabbalistic concept of the *tzaddik* had been around for several centuries before the Hasidim arrived on the scene, but it was they who institutionalized it and gave the *tzaddik* a crucial role in everyday life. Spiritually, the *tzaddik* was considered to be on a higher rung of the ladder than most people, but since the whole Jewish community was bound together, the Besht envisaged him as a man who was obligated to step down from his exalted position and intimate contemplation of God to better care for the spiritual and earthly needs of the people. Belief in the power of the *tzaddikim* not only had far-reaching effects on the Hasidic movement and on the relationship of its adherents to their leaders but, in the final analysis, might be said to be the single factor that distinguishes Hasidism from all other Jewish movements.

The rabbinical authorities of Vilna, led by the Gaon, at first contented themselves with merely denouncing the new "sect" and hoping that it would go away. But after the Besht died, in 1760, and the Hasidic light failed to dim, opposition began to take a more serious form. It became particularly intense after the death, in 1772, of his formidable successor, Dov Baer of Mezhirichi. In various East European towns and cities, bans were pronounced against the Hasidim by their rabbinical opponents. The bans meant that the Hasidim were in effect excommunicated. They were now called heretics; other Jews were forbidden to eat their meat or drink their wine; and intermarriage with them was also forbidden. "Had I the power," declared

Rabbi Elijah, "I would have punished these infidels as the worshippers of Baal were punished of old."

Even excommunication did not seem severe enough punishment to him. A letter originating in Vilna was circulated throughout East European Jewish communities the year of Dov Baer's death. It charged that the Hasidim "meet together in separate groups and deviate in their prayers from the text valid for the whole people," and continued:

> They are the same who, in the middle of . . . prayer, interject obnoxious alien words [that is, Yiddish] in a loud voice, conduct themselves like madmen, and explain their behavior by saying that in their thoughts they soar in the most far-off worlds. . . . The study of the Torah is neglected by them entirely and they do not hesitate constantly to emphasize that one should devote oneself as little as possible to learning and not grieve too much over a sin committed. . . . Every day is for them a holiday. . . . When they pray according to falsified texts, they raise such a din that the walls quake. . . . And they turn over like wheels, with the head below and the legs above. . . . Therefore, do we now declare to our brethren in Israel, to those near as well as far. . . . All heads of the people shall robe themselves in the raiment of zeal . . . for the Lord of Hosts, to extirpate, to destroy, to outlaw and to excommunicate them.

Severe as such censure was, it did little to slow the growth of the movement. As the number of Hasidic groups throughout Europe increased, they developed into dynastic courts—with names usually drawn either from the seats of the dynasties or the birthplace of their founders—and differences began to appear among them. Some courts became known for their rationalistic bent (for instance, the Lubavitchers), some for their miracle-working (the Belzers), some for their mysticism (the Bratslavers), and some for their wealth (the Rizhyners).

When a rebbe, or leader of a court, died, one of his sons usually became the new rebbe. But it is clear from Hasidic tales about the rebbes that popularity and chance played equal roles in the selection of who would assume the leadership. "The essential dictum of the choice is the closeness of the successor to the Rebbe, for their intimacy in life ensures the transfer of piety and power and the maintenance of traditional patterns," the anthropologist Jerome R. Mintz observed in "Legends of the Hasidim," his study of Hasidic life as it is reflected in contemporary tales of the various courts. "Often a son-in-law, a nephew, or a close disciple of the deceased Rebbe is named. . . . When the Lubavitcher Rebbe died in 1950, the two candidates were the Rebbe's sons-in-law. Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson had the strongest supporters and was asked to become the Rebbe, while his brother-in-law remained head of the yeshiveh."

Belief in the rightness of dynastic leadership remains unshaken among Hasidim today, although, naturally enough, history has provided instances that might give them pause about the wisdom of the tradition. For example, one of the Besht's grandsons, Baruch of Medzhibozh, lived the luxurious life of an Eastern potentate, and even had a court jester to help while away his idle hours. Menachem Mendel of Kotzk (1787-1859) was a misanthrope, who declared that "the whole world is not worth a sigh." Only the Bratslavers, who never chose another leader after their great *tzaddik*, Rabbi Nahman, died in 1810—and for that reason are sometimes referred to as "the dead Hasidim"—have gone against the tide and remained leaderless. Hasidic chroniclers invariably boast about their rebbes: the miracles they performed, the calamities they averted, the barren marriages they made fruitful, the sick they healed, the good works they inspired, and the valor with which they defended themselves against their enemies. But the chronicles do not, except in very rare instances, tell us anything about their self-doubts, false turns, or outright mistakes. One feels, when reading these texts, a strong sense of irritation and frustration. The great rebbes' thoughts about God are always made abundantly clear, but what they thought about themselves, each other, their families, their friends, or the neighbor whose horse kicked down their fence is loftily ignored. Nowadays, biographers may err in the other direction. Nonetheless, the modern reader rebels against this dismissal of the quotidian. One longs for a bit of gossip, a description of furniture, a weather report. In vain. The diet that readers of Hasidic "biographies" must learn to sustain themselves on is one of fable and moral philosophy.

The power and authority of the rebbes have always been strengthened by the belief that many of them were reincarnations of sainted Jewish leaders. Reb Asher, a Stoliner rebbe, was believed by his followers to have inherited King David's soul. A leader of the Apter Hasidim announced one Yom Kippur that he had been a high

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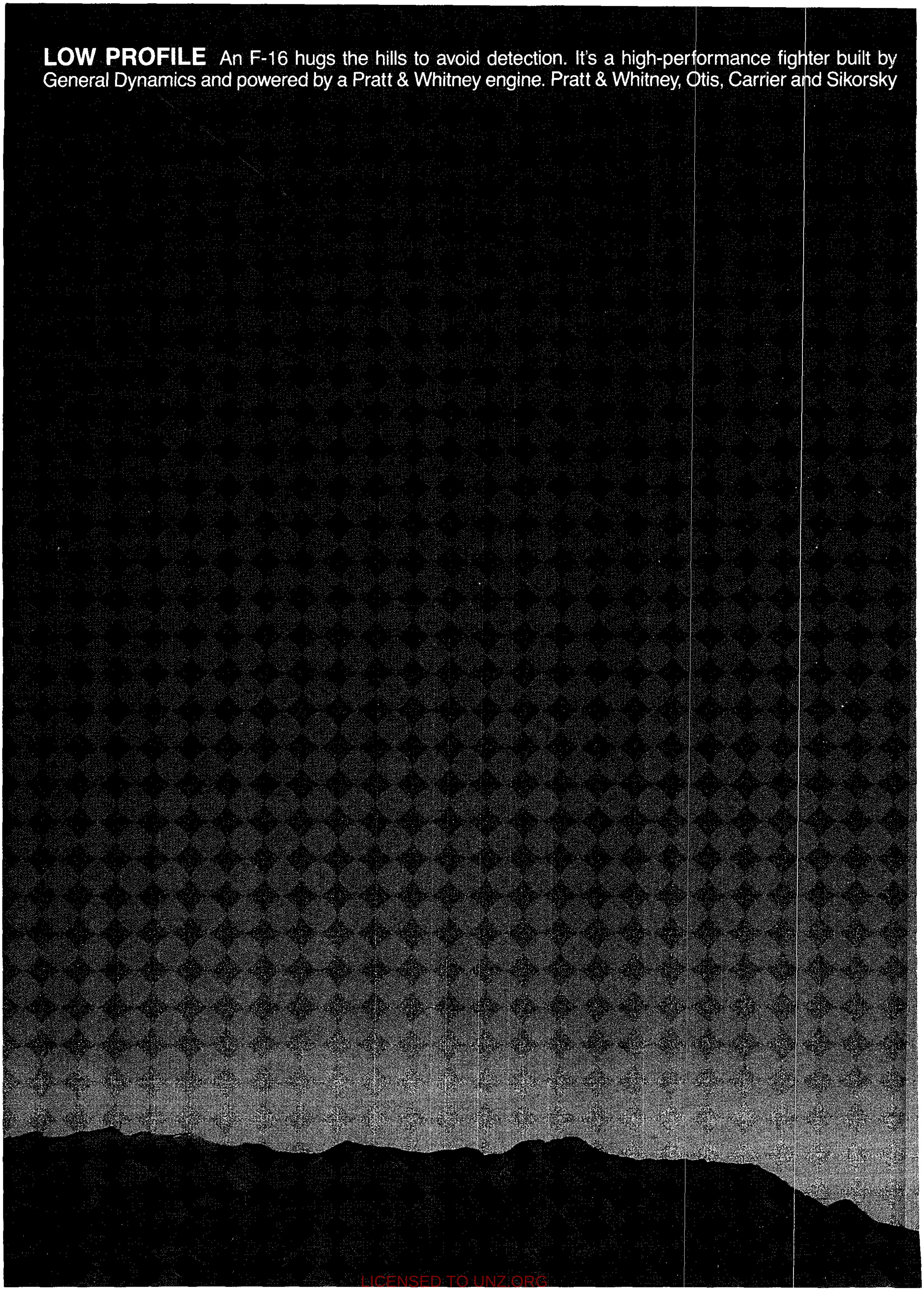

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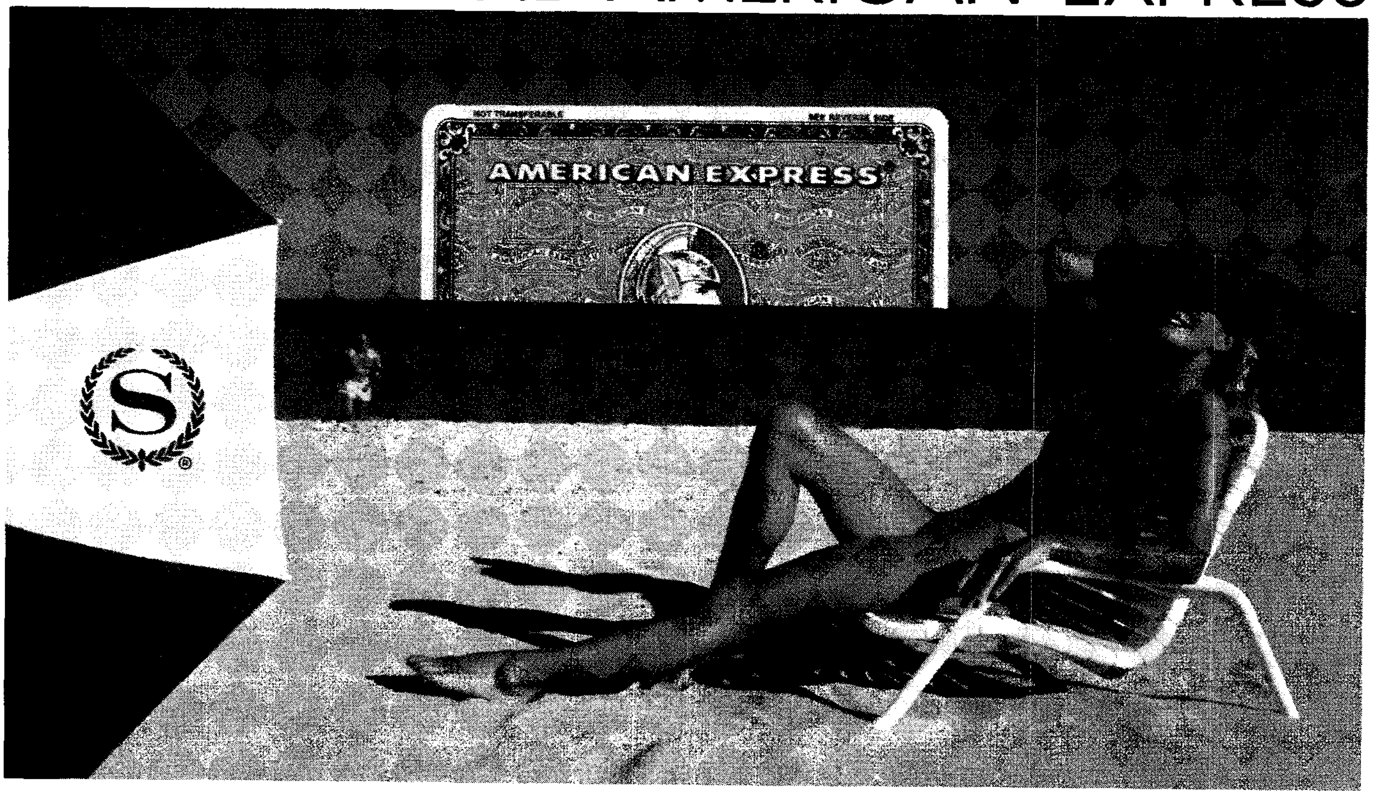

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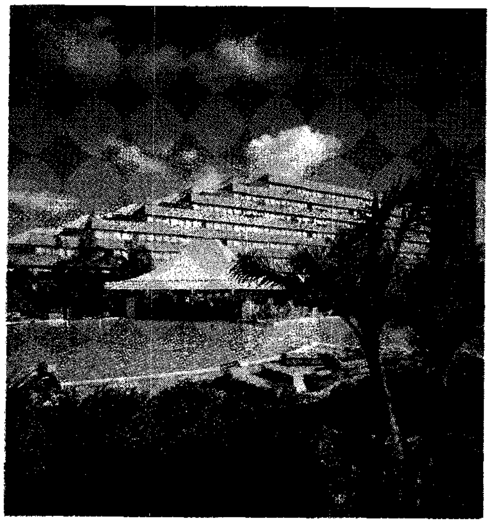

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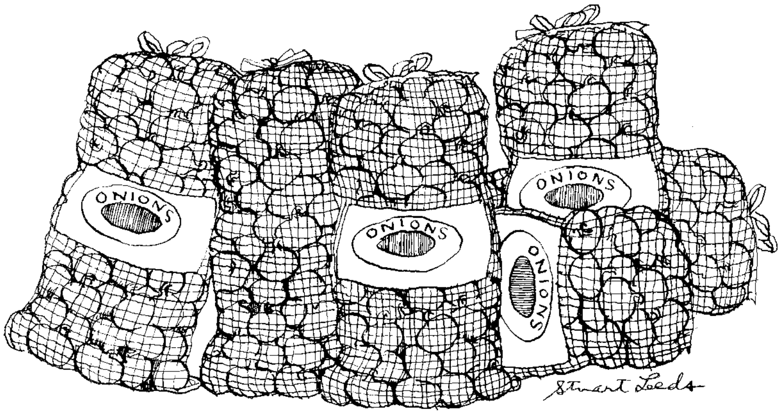
priest in Jerusalem; and Moshe Teitelbaum, a Satmarer leader, revealed to his amazed followers that in an earlier life he had been a sheep in Jacob's flock and in another had participated in the Exodus and witnessed the destruction of the tablets. He also said that in a third reincarnation he had witnessed the fall of the first Temple, in 586 B.C., but he declined to say who he was at the time; when it was suggested that he had been the prophet Jeremiah he did not deny it.

In contrast to many of their fellow-Hasidim, the Lubavitcher rebbes have from the beginning stressed the practical and rational aspects of serving God, although mysticism plays no small part in the stories told about them, or in their world view. The story of the birth of the Lubavitchers' founder, Rabbi Schneur Zalman, for example, is steeped in mystical meaning. According to Hasidic belief, most souls have been sent back to earth in order to, as Nissan Mindel, Schneur Zalman's Lubavitcher biographer, put it, "make amends for wrongs or omissions in a life which had once, or even more than once, been spent on earth." New, untainted souls are a great rarity, but the Besht is said to have had a mystical premonition that Schneur Zalman was one, and that he would "disseminate the Hasidic way with selfless dedication, preparing the way for the arrival of the Messiah." For motives that are obscure, the Besht played no direct part in the boy's upbringing, and did not even permit Schneur Zalman's father to bring him along on his annual visits to the Besht's home, in Medzhibozh, a village in the southeastern Polish province of Podolia. The only explanation he ever gave for avoiding the boy was the enigmatic "He is not destined to be my disciple—he belongs to my successor."

Dov Baer, the Besht's successor, was a gifted Talmud scholar, who eventually systematized his mentor's teaching and synthesized it with the philosophy of the sixteenth-century Kabbalist Isaac Luria. Unlike the Besht, Dov Baer, who is frequently referred to as the Great Maggid (*maggid* means "preacher"), did not travel about much, partly because he was never very robust, and he was not perceived by the common people as one of them. Nonetheless, he was widely respected as a teacher, and was charismatic enough to become the movement's leader after the Besht died. Housebound as he often was, Dov Baer drew scores of distinguished men to his home, in Mezhirichi, a town in central Poland, and attracted many new disciples from the intellectual and wealthy classes. These followers did not come and go, as most of the Besht's students had, but remained with him. In a sense, Dov Baer's was the first Hasidic court.



Schneur Zalman was born in 1745, in the town of Liozna, in Lithuania, then a part of Poland. He did not meet Dov Baer until he was twenty. By then, he had been married for five years and was living in his wife's home town of Vitebsk. He had quickly surpassed his teachers, so he decided to take temporary leave of his wife and friends and seek instruction elsewhere—the custom among young scholars. In Vitebsk, as in most of the rather conservative, strongly anti-Hasidic towns of Lithuania, young men who pursued their education away from home generally went to Vilna, the Lithuanian capital, to study under the tutelage of the Gaon. Much to the dismay of his wealthy father-in-law, who had been supporting his life of study, Schneur Zalman decided that he would rather study in the distant town of Mezhirichi with the Hasid Dov Baer, whose reputation as a Talmud scholar was excellent and whose new views interested him. The measure of distaste aroused by the Hasidim is suggested by the fact that when he announced this plan his father-in-law cut off all financial support. Nonetheless, he and his wife managed to raise some money, and he left for what he promised would not be more than a year and a half.

The visit was very nearly much shorter. Dov Baer seemed at first unlikely to live up to his new student's expectations. He and his circle devoted so many hours to prayer and to preparations for prayer that there seemed to be little time left for study. Convinced that this form of worship was alien to him, Schneur Zalman decided to leave, but, having forgotten some of his belongings in the study house, he returned, and found Dov Baer there, explaining some point of law to his followers. Listening to him, the young scholar was deeply impressed by the master's passion and erudition, and afterward, while he was listening to his new mentor tell a story that was full of Kabbalistic references, he had his first mystical experience. The doctrines that underlay the story were that God was unknowable even to the purest celestial creatures; that the raison d'être of creation was man, a body and a soul firmly planted on the earth; and that the true purpose of man was to obey the divine law. Schneur Zalman spent much of his life expounding these doctrines, and he wrote about them in detail in his famous religious guide, "Likutei Amarim," or "Collected Essays," which is popularly known as the "Tanya," after the first word (an Aramaic word meaning "It has been taught") of the Hebrew text. When he returned home to Vitebsk the promised year and a half later, his friends asked him what he had found in Mezhirichi that was so much better than what they had gone to Vilna for. He replied, "In Vilna, you are taught how to master the Torah; in Mezhirichi, you are taught how to let the Torah master you."

According to his Lubavitcher biographers, the next few years were a time of poverty and isolation for Schneur Zalman and his wife, but their horizon brightened in 1767, when Dov Baer asked him to become the local teacher in Liozna, the young scholar's birthplace. Three years later, Dov Baer suggested that he revise and update the Shulchan Aruch, the Code of Jewish Law, which had been compiled more than two hundred years before by the rabbinical codifier Joseph Karo and was the standard text referred to by Jews on questions of law. As one of his admirers later put it, "it was an enormous . . . task, requiring extraordinary erudition and mastery of the entire Talmudic and Halachic [legal] literature as well as a boldness to arbitrate and make decisions in disputed cases involving the opinions of the greatest masters of Jewish Law up to his time." Except for one section, which was published anonymously during his lifetime, the revised Code was not published until after Schneur Zalman's death. Known as the Rav's Shulchan Aruch, to distinguish it from Joseph Karo's, it has since become the Lubavitchers' standard Code of Law.

When Dov Baer died, the leadership was to have passed to his son Abraham, but Abraham felt unequal to the role and refused to accept it. Leaderless, the Great Maggid's disciples decided to separate and journey to various parts of Eastern Europe to carry on their work. Schneur Zalman drew the thankless mission of trying to win over Lithuania, that hotbed of anti-Hasidism. Despite the intensified opposition, he succeeded in drawing a large part of the population into the Hasidic fold and helped establish a seminary in Liozna, which soon attracted some of the most gifted young scholars of the day. Sometimes, visiting distant communities, he concealed his identity to avoid the hostility of the *mitnagdim*, as the opponents of Hasidism were called. On one occasion, he travelled to Vilna with a friend to attempt to persuade the Gaon that his opposition to the movement was based on groundless fears. The two men appeared at Rabbi Elijah's door twice, hoping for an audience, but they were refused each time. When several highly regarded members of the community tried to intercede on their behalf, the Rabbi left town and did not return until after the two Hasidim had departed. Opposition to Hasidism had hardened because of rumors that some of the Great Maggid's disciples—Rabbi Abraham of Kalisk and his friends—had been seen somersaulting and dancing wildly in the streets and mocking the *mitnagdim* in the synagogues (they were), and that a certain Hasidic leader had been seen at a feast on a solemn holy day holding a female on his lap (also true, except that the female was his baby granddaughter). On the few occasions when Hasidic books appeared, they were publicly burned. Book burnings were recorded in Vilna, Brody, and Bohemia. In 1783, a public debate was arranged between Schneur Zalman and a group of venerable leaders of the *mitnagdim*. The old Talmudists expected to trounce the Hasidic leaders by overwhelming them with their knowledge, but, according to one witness, as many as four hundred of the Talmud scholars who attended the debate were impressed enough by what Schneur Zalman said to become converts to Hasidism, and many of them followed him back to Liozna to join his community.

In the decades that followed, Schneur Zalman became the de-facto leader of all Belorussian Hasidim, and the founder of what came to be called Chabad Hasidism. ("Chabad" is an acronym of the Hebrew words for wisdom, understanding, and knowledge; this form of Hasidism became popularly known as Lubavitcher Hasidism when its leaders moved to the Belorussian town of Lubavitch, two years after Schneur Zalman's death.) Handwritten copies of the "Tanya" began to appear all over Eastern Europe. What the "Tanya" offered was nothing less than a synthesis of the mystical and rational currents of Jewish thought, together with a highly original, complex kind of mystical psychology, which held that by searching their own souls men would come to understand all the dimensions of the world. As the author says in his foreword, the "Tanya" was written for "seekers" and the "perplexed." The latter were not, in these times, the sophisticated perplexed for whom Maimonides wrote his "Guide" six centuries earlier, who were torn between the contradictory claims of philosophy and faith, but the just plain confused perplexed, who were untroubled by doubts about their faith yet were unable—as the author puts it—"to perceive the beneficial light that is concealed in books."

Schneur Zalman stressed the intellect far more than the Besht had. Like the Besht, he recognized the importance of pure faith and simple emotional attachment to God, but, unlike him, he focussed as well on the importance of intellectual comprehension of that attachment. The "Tanya" stressed a practical mysticism and a system of contemplation that gave every Jew a chance to transcend the limitations of his own existence. It postulated the presence in each individual of two souls: the "animal soul," from which proceeds all of what is called "human nature;" and the "divine soul," which exists before it enters a body, survives the body after death, and enables human beings to rise above their natural inclinations in the service of God. Forged copies of the "Tanya," written by its enemies, also occasionally made an appearance. They invariably contained heretical passages and caused a great uproar in the religious community, so in 1796 Schneur Zalman published his book officially. Its popularity only added fuel to the opposition, however, and two years later he was formally denounced by some of the *mitnagdim* as a traitor to Russia, which had by now taken over most of Poland. One of the charges against him was that he was sending money to the government of Palestine. The charge was based in part on truth, for throughout the eighteenth century Hasidim had migrated to Palestine and had counted on their East European brethren for financial support. But in 1796 Palestine was ruled by Turkey. Russia and Turkey had been at war from 1787 to 1792, and Russia was still on uneasy terms with Turkey, fearing its expansionist aims in the Mediterranean. As the *mitnagdim* knew only too well, Czar Paul I was unsure of the loyalty of the Polish nationalists who had so recently come under the wing of the Russian eagle. He was easily persuaded that the Hasidim were dangerous rebels who were sending money to a hostile foreign power. Schneur Zalman was arrested and incarcerated in St. Petersburg's Peter-Paul fortress.

According to Hasidic legend, the black carriage that picked up the *alter* ("old") Rebbe, as the Lubavitchers usually refer to him, to carry him from Liozna to St. Petersburg was still on the road the following day, which was a Friday. Several hours before sunset, the Rebbe asked the officer in charge of the military escort to stop and wait until after the Sabbath to complete the journey. The officer refused. Minutes later, the story goes, one of the carriage axles broke. A blacksmith was summoned from a nearby village, and it was fixed. They proceeded, but a

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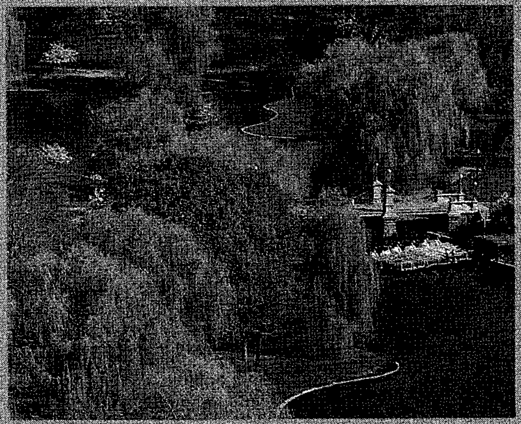

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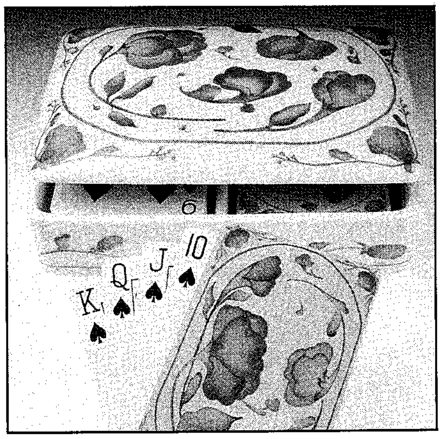

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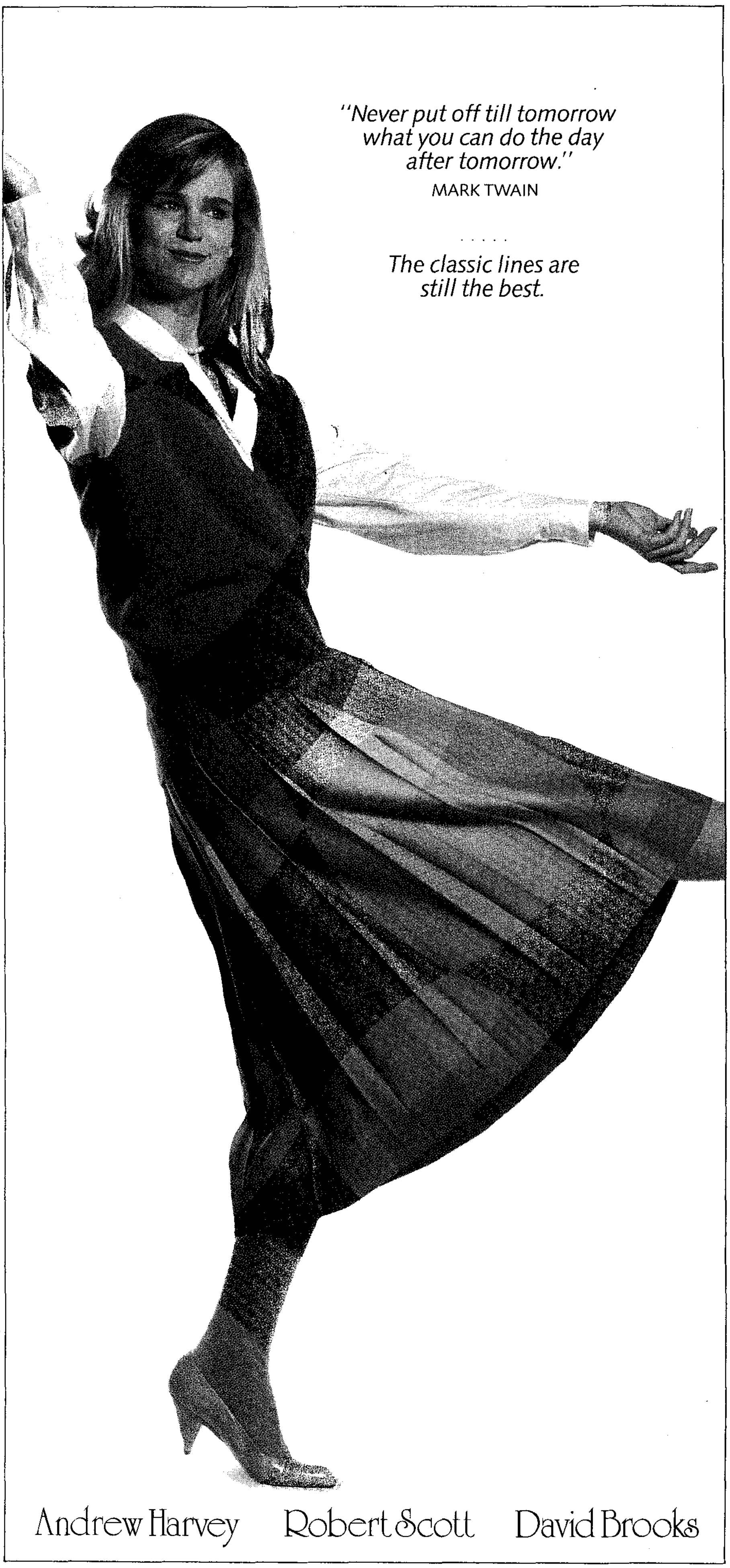
short time later one of the horses toppled to the ground and died. A fresh horse was brought, but, to the soldiers' astonishment, the horses, strain as they might, were unable to budge the carriage. The officer in charge, convinced that mysterious forces were at work, relented at last and agreed to stop at the next town, but the Rebbe, fearing that they might not reach the next town before sunset, refused to go another foot. In the end, they camped where they had stopped, by the side of the road, and continued on Saturday night without further incident.

In St. Petersburg, the Rebbe was questioned closely, but his interrogators could find no way to justify any of the charges brought against him. Fifty-three days later—the number happened to correspond exactly to the number of chapters in the "Tanya," as his followers noted with satisfaction—the Czar released him. (The Lubavitchers celebrate the anniversary of the release, which falls six days before the holiday of Hanukkah.) Two years later, the Rebbe was once again denounced and arrested. During his second period of detention, Czar Paul was assassinated, and the new czar, Alexander I—who was determined to win the approval of all his subjects, even the Jews—released the Rebbe within a few weeks of his assumption of power. After his release, the Rebbe journeyed to the town of Liadi, in Belorussia, to establish another Hasidic center. He remained in Liadi for the last decade of his life, ministering to the spiritual needs of his followers and trying to better the economic conditions of Russian Jews, chiefly by raising funds to help poor families in the crowded cities move to country towns and villages.

When Napoleon launched his Russian campaign, Schneur Zalman sided with Russia—unlike most of the Jews of Eastern Europe, who were impressed by the 1807 Treaty of Tilsit, which gave Jews the same rights enjoyed by all the other citizens of Napoleon's newly created principalities. The Rebbe's choice was dictated chiefly by his distaste for French morals and by his lasting loyalty to Czar Alexander, his liberator. As Napoleon approached Liadi, in August of 1812, the Rebbe, who was then sixty-seven, was forced to flee. For five months, he and his family stayed just ahead of the advancing French Army, but the journey was a difficult one, and the winter, of course, was unusually harsh. In the end, the hardships proved to be too much for him, and he fell ill and died.

At the time of the Rebbe's death, the Hasidic community was larger than it had been a generation before, but it was far from stable. It was threatened not only by outsiders but by internal strife as well. Many Hasidim, especially the less educated folk of the southern provinces, felt that Schneur Zalman's followers were unduly concerned with scholarship and self-analysis, and insufficiently passionate—a charge that is still brought against the Lubavitchers by other Hasidic groups today. At the same time, all Jewish communities were beginning to feel the pinpricks of the Haskalah, or Jewish Enlightenment, a secularizing educational movement that arose in Western Europe and that eventually superseded Hasidism as a social force.

THERE have been seven Lubavitcher rebbes all told, beginning with Schneur Zalman, and all but two of them, the fifth rebbe and the present one, were imprisoned at one time or another. Rabbi Dov Baer (1773-1827), the second Lubavitcher leader, was a son of Schneur Zalman. Sometimes, though not often, he is referred to as Dov Baer Schneuri; "Schneuri" means "Schneur's son," and evolved into Schneerson, the surname used by later generations. In 1814, perhaps because of unhappy associations with the town his father had been forced to flee, Rabbi Dov Baer moved from Liadi to Lubavitch (the name means City of Love), a town on the River Dnieper, and Lubavitch remained the seat of the dynasty for the next hundred years. In 1826, the Rebbe was imprisoned, like his father, and on a similarly trumped-up charge—sending rubles to the Sultan of Turkey. He was eventually released, but he died not long afterward. The third Lubavitcher rebbe, Menachem Mendel (1789-1866), was a grandson of Schneur Zalman, (and was also Rabbi Dov Baer's son-in-law). He is almost invariably referred to as the Tzemach Tzedek ("Blossom of Justice"), the title of his popular Talmudic responsa. Widely admired as his erudition was, the Tzemach Tzedek was doubtless better known in his own generation for thinking up an ingenious scheme to keep untold numbers of Jewish children out of the Russian Army. In 1827, Czar Nicholas I introduced the legal conscription of children twelve years of age and older. The Jewish communities were sup-



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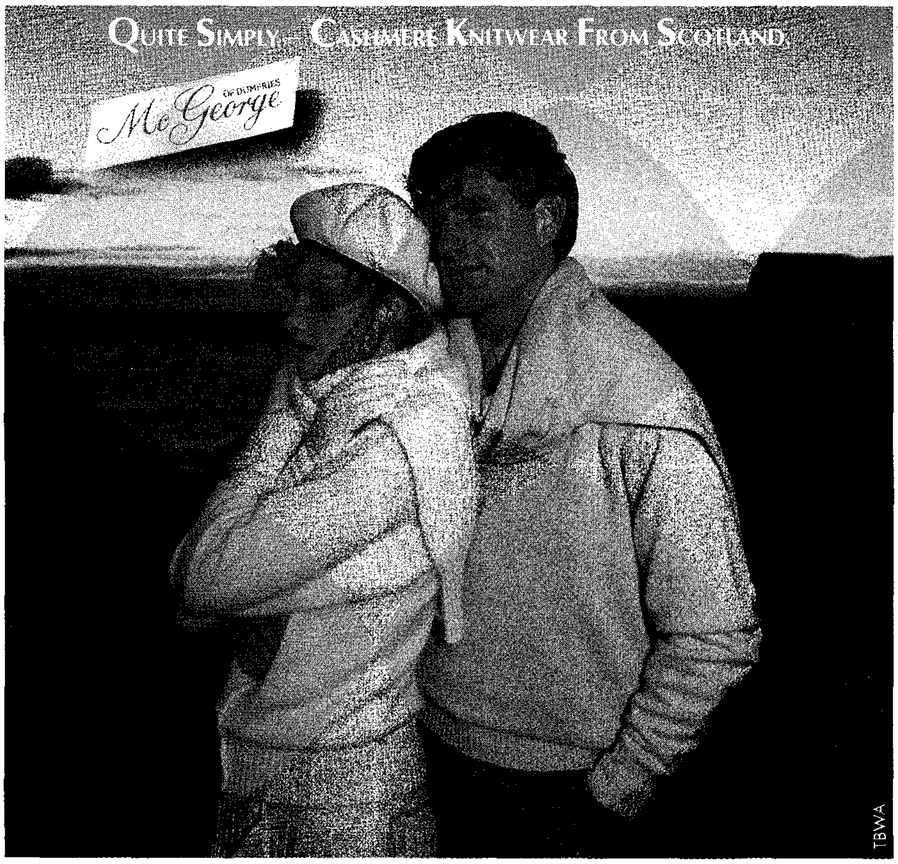
posed to supply a quota of ten children per thousand people; Christians had a smaller quota and various helpful exemptions. When the authorities discovered that most Jewish communities could not or would not supply their quota, government agents known as "catchers" were sent to the communities to find children, often as young as seven or eight. Children thus caught were either put in special schools or sent to live with peasant families until they were eighteen. Then they were sent to military barracks to serve as soldiers for twenty-five years. This not only removed children from their families for the greater part of their lives but threatened to alienate them forever from their culture. Sometimes the "catchers" could be bought off, but most Jews were too poor to afford bribes. At what was apparently considerable personal risk—since what he was doing was certainly treasonous—the Tzemach Tzedek formed a secret society dedicated to freeing the kidnapped children. It was known as Techias Hameisim (Resurrection of the Dead), and its members kept track of the conscripted children and gathered funds to pay government officials for their ransom. The officials would tell their Army liaisons that the children had died en route to their destination, and would issue death certificates to the families. The children still had to be hidden, usually with relatives or other Jewish families in some distant town, but eventually they would return to their own families, bodies and beliefs intact.

When the Tzemach Tzedek died, in 1866, the leadership passed to his son Rabbi Shmuel (1834-82). The fourth rebbe's tenure coincided with a particularly vicious period of anti-Semitism in Russia—one in which Jew-baiting, riots, and pogroms were commonplace and cabals against the Jews originated in the highest government circles. Because of his friendship with various noblemen and foreign dignitaries, the fourth rebbe was often successful in quelling a bit of the anti-Semitic fervor in the government and protecting Jews in troubled towns and villages.

The fifth Lubavitcher rebbe—once again, a son of the previous one—was Rabbi Sholom Dov Baer (1860-1920). He was known chiefly for his zeal in organizing yeshivas throughout Russia and for upgrading the level of religious education for isolated Jews, such as those who lived in the Caucasus. It was during the fifth rebbe's tenure, in



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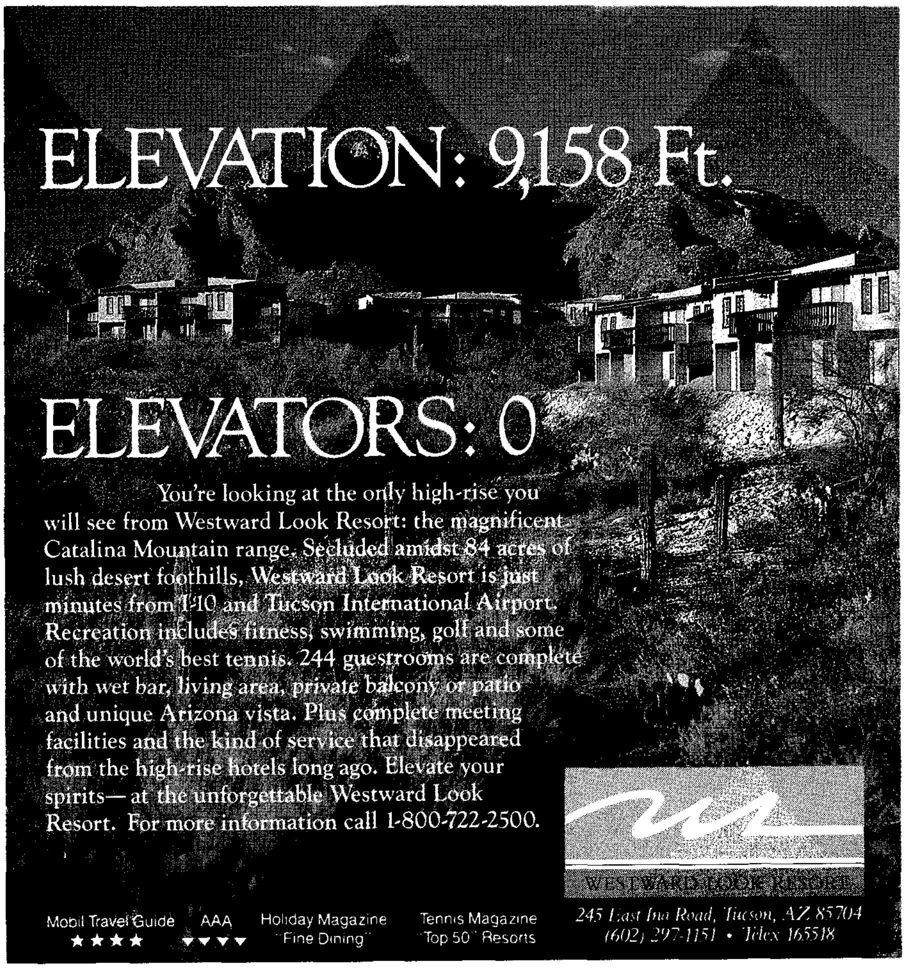

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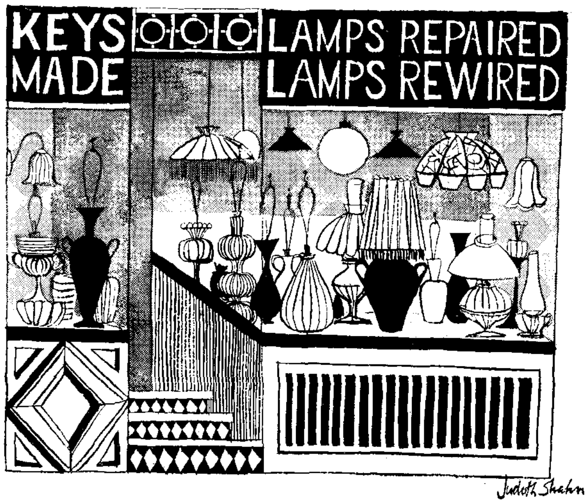
1915, that the seat of the dynasty was moved from Lubavitch. Because the German Army was coming perilously close, the court was transferred to Rostov-on-Don, some six hundred miles to the southeast.

The sixth Lubavitcher leader was Rabbi Joseph I. Schneerson (1880-1950), the son of Rabbi Sholom Dov Baer. For many years before he assumed the leadership, in 1920, he had worked as his father's personal secretary. During that period, he headed the Lubavitcher yeshivas, which trained many of the religious scholars of prewar Europe; he helped expand the Lubavitcher programs for aiding poor Jews and settling them in rural areas where they could be self-sufficient; and he, too, travelled extensively, as a trouble-shooter for beleaguered Jews. Before the Revolution, he was arrested four times by the czarist government for "interfering" on behalf of his coreligionists in various towns and villages throughout Russia. After the Revolution, when poverty and hunger worsened everyone's lot, the recently chosen leader of the Lubavitchers found that his flock faced antagonism from another quarter—the anti-religious Yevsektzias, the Jewish branches of the Communist Party, which saw the Hasidim as enemies of the new state. The Yevsektzias were later dissolved by the Soviet government, but for a time they aided the government in a campaign to undermine the still influential Hasidim by acts of intimidation and harassment. In 1921, doubtful whether the Lubavitcher yeshivas in Russia could continue to exist, the Rebbe founded a new yeshiva in Warsaw, and predicted that it would before long become the hub of Lubavitcher teaching. He also organized the first Chabad (the name is still frequently used by the Lubavitchers for official purposes) communities in the United States and Canada.

Rabbi Schneerson's fears proved well founded. One morning in 1927, while he was praying in a synagogue in Leningrad, the secret police rushed in and arrested him. At police headquarters, according to one story, he was asked at gunpoint to give up his religious activities. When he refused, his interrogator brandished the gun and said, "This little toy has made many a man change his mind." The Rebbe is reported to have answered, "This little toy can intimidate only that kind of man who has many gods and but one world. Because I have only one God and two worlds, I am not impressed by this little toy." He was sent home soon afterward, but he was arrested again later in the year and this time given a death sentence and placed in solitary confinement in Leningrad's Spalerno Prison. Released again, at the last moment, thanks to the intervention of a number of foreign statesmen, he was banished for a time to the Urals. When he returned, he lived briefly in a tiny village outside Moscow. Then, again with the help of foreign dignitaries, he obtained permission to leave Russia with his family and his voluminous library, and settle in Riga. Shortly afterward, he journeyed to Palestine, and in 1929 he visited the United States. On his American tour, he appealed everywhere for support for the Russian Jews; he even met with President Herbert Hoover at the White House, where he discussed the plight of Russian Jewry. After his tour, he settled in Warsaw, which, as he had predicted, had become the new center of Lubavitcher life.

When the Second World War broke out, most of Rabbi Schneerson's friends and followers urged him to leave Warsaw, but he remained and, during the siege of the city and after its surrender to the Germans, managed to help hundreds of European students find their way to safer zones and help his American students find safe passage home. In 1940, however, he finally became convinced that the world he and his ancestors had built was being obliterated, and that the only hope of patching together anything of what was left lay in the United States. With the help of the State Department, he was offered safe conduct to Berlin, and he arrived in New York on March 19, 1940, on the S.S. Drottningholm. Hundreds of his followers, many of whom were recent émigrés themselves, were on hand at the pier to give him an emotional welcome. He settled in the Brooklyn neighborhood of Crown Heights, where his court had already established a beachhead, and he remained there until his death, ten years later. Although he had been weakened by his ordeals, he worked hard to launch programs to help Jewish refugees settle in America and to revitalize what remained of his movement. Today, most of the city's fifteen thousand Lubavitcher Hasidim live in Crown Heights. Many of the institutions that have helped them thrive began under the sixth rebbe's tutelage: Machne Israel, the movement's social-service organization; Lubavitcher yeshivas in Brooklyn, Worcester, Pittsburgh, New Haven, and Montreal; the Merkos L'Inyonei Chinuch (Central Organization for Jewish Education); several girls' schools, including Beis Rivkah, which most of the Lubavitcher girls of Crown Heights attend; the Kehot Publication Society, which is the world's largest publisher of Hasidic texts; a program that enables non-Hasidic children to spend *Shabbos* with a Hasidic family; a Chabad village (Kfar Chabad) near Tel Aviv; and a program to reach the Jews of North Africa, and especially Morocco—a project that was more fully realized by his successor.

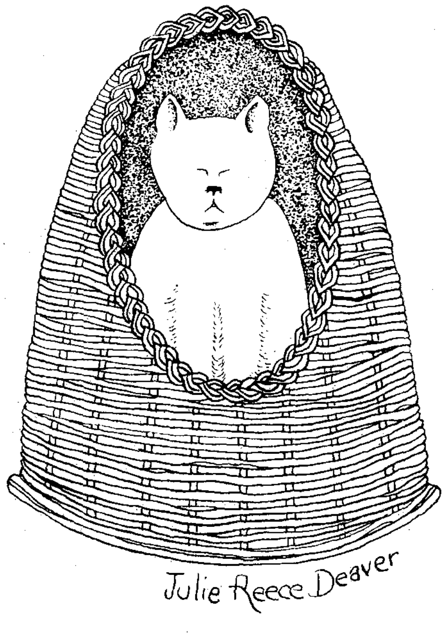
Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, the seventh leader of the Lubavitchers and the son-in-law of his predecessor, was born in the Ukrainian city of Nikolayev in 1902. He and the sixth rebbe have the same last name because they are both descendants of sons of Rabbi Menachem Mendel, the third Lubavitcher rebbe. Like his immediate predecessor, the present rebbe was admired early in life as an *illui* (a Torah prodigy), but, unlike any of the previous Lubavitcher rebbes—or, indeed, any other Hasidic leader—he allowed himself to tread on secular soil long enough to attend the University of Berlin and the Sorbonne, where he received a degree in engineering. Non-Lubavitcher Hasidim tend to deprecate this educational deviation from the norm, but the Rebbe's followers are quick to point out that his piety is beyond



reproach and that his modern outlook and his grasp of the realities of the secular world have probably helped to attract thousands of sympathizers to a movement that forty years ago appeared moribund. He and his wife, Chaya Moussia, were married in Warsaw in 1929, and followed the sixth rebbe to America in 1941. Three years after Menachem Mendel Schneerson's arrival, he received word that his father, a famous Kabbalist, had died in a remote village in Kazakhstan, in central Russia. In 1939, the old rabbi had been arrested in his house, in the city of Ekaterinoslav, by the N.K.V.D. for his religious activities. He was taken away, imprisoned, then exiled to the little village, where he died at the age of sixty-six. This sad event is thought to have marked the seventh Lubavitcher rebbe for life, and many have speculated that it is one of the reasons he has been especially zealous in succoring Jews throughout the world in times of crisis. It may also help to explain his insistence on remaining with his flock in a decaying section of Brooklyn instead of moving to a safe, sunny suburb; in fact, except for one trip to Paris after the war, to fetch his mother, Rabbi Schneerson has not left New York City since the day he arrived.

ACCORDING to Robert Steingut, a former New York City councilman and the present chairman of the New York State Workers' Compensation Board, the Lubavitchers chose to live in Crown Heights because of his grandfather. Mr. Steingut's father is Stanley Steingut, the former Speaker of the New York State Assembly, and his grandfather was Irwin Steingut, a powerful political figure of the nineteen-twenties and thirties. In the mid-thirties, a group of Orthodox Jews came to Irwin Steingut and asked him to help a group of Russian Hasidim who were stuck in Poland and were not being allowed to emigrate to this country. They were Lubavitchers, the group's spokesman explained, and their position was desperate. Shortly afterward, Steingut called upon President Franklin Roosevelt, with whom he had worked when Roosevelt was governor of New York, and, with Roosevelt's help, he succeeded in getting the stranded Lubavitchers to the United States. At the time, Irwin Steingut lived in Crown Heights, on Eastern Parkway. "How do you say thank you to a politician like my grandfather if you're a Lubavitcher émigré?" Mr. Steingut asked rhetorically when I talked with him some time ago in his office, overlooking New York Harbor. "You move into the neighborhood." Robert Steingut's parents also lived in Crown Heights—at 1298 President Street, which happens to be the house next door to the Rebbe's—and he grew up there during the nineteen-fifties. He remembers the Rebbe as "an invariably gentle, kind man who never acted disapproving or preachy" with him or his family, although the Steinguts' manner of living differed radically from that of the Rebbe and his followers. Whenever he and the Rebbe encountered one another, he recalled, the Rebbe always seemed interested in the minutiae of his everyday life. Nor did the Rebbe become unduly upset on those occasions when the Steinguts had to send a glazier over because Robert or his brother had knocked a baseball through one of the Rebbe's windows. Hesitating a bit, Mr. Steingut added that he has always felt that he and the Rebbe have a special bond, and that it might have something to do with the fact that he and his brother and sister were the only children that the Rebbe, who is childless, ever got to see in an ordinary day-to-day way over a long period of time.

It is said that Rabbi Schneerson assumed the mantle of leader of the Lubavitchers somewhat reluctantly. Nonetheless, he has infused into the role a vigor and breadth that it has not had since the early days of Hasidism. Having declared that the Lubavitcher motto, "*Uforatzto*"—"And you shall spread out" (Genesis 28:14)—had an especially urgent meaning in the post-Holocaust world, the Rebbe set about opening Lubavitcher centers throughout the United States, and also in Argentina, Brazil, Venezuela, England, Scotland, France, Holland, Italy, West Germany, South Africa, and Canada. He created a "Jewish Peace Corps," which sent students and young couples to communities throughout the country to try to quicken the interest of Jewish groups in religious observance; he established the Lubavitch Women's Organization, and the Lubavitch Youth Organization, which operates the so-called *mitzvah* tanks—white campers that travel about spreading the Lubavitcher message. In recent years, he has also sent hundreds of emissaries to speak at colleges and universities. Today, there are thirty-five Lubavitcher yeshivas in the United States, and a hundred and seventy-five in other countries. There are about a hundred Chabad houses in American college communities, providing not only lodging but counselling, drug programs, *Shabbos* and holiday services, and adult-education classes; and there are another hundred Chabad houses in foreign countries. Last year, thirty-five thousand children attended Lubavitcher summer camps around the world. Many of the Rebbe's projects have been carried out on quite a grand scale. In 1967, during the Six-Day War between the Arabs and the Israelis, he initiated a "*tefillin* campaign." *Tefillin* are the small leather box-and-strap devices that religious Jewish men affix to their heads and their left arms for weekday morning prayers. Lubavitcher Hasidim went everywhere trying to persuade Jewish men to wear them, and the Rebbe's followers believe that it was the willingness of many of the Israeli soldiers to don *tefillin* that won the war for Israel. Although his emissaries have been schooled to approach assimilated Jews with delicacy, the campaign literature distributed by his flock to anyone who appears interested in learning more about Judaism is phrased in absolutes: "All Jewish men and boys over thirteen should put on *tefillin* every weekday;" "Jewish women and girls from the age of three should light candles before *Shabbos* and on holidays;" "Jewish women should keep kosher homes and observe the Laws of Family Purity." One of the precepts that the Rebbe urges his followers to focus on is to love their fellow-Jews. This love, in the form of hospitality and "encounter" weekends in Crown Heights, and lectures out-



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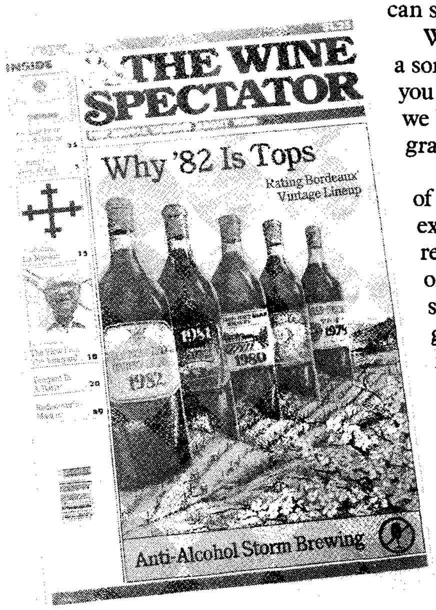


side the neighborhood about Hasidic life, plays a large role in the community's sense of itself.

Rabbi Schneerson sponsors monthly kindergarten classes for children who live far from synagogues; he has sent representatives armed with prayer books and *tefillin* to the jungles of Panama; he has sent a *mohel* (a man who performs ritual circumcisions) to a tiny Caribbean island to make sure that a baby was properly circumcised; he has sent a rabbi to conduct religious services for a handful of Jewish soldiers posted in Alaska; and he has sent ambassadors to keep the embers of Judaism burning in various minuscule Jewish communities in Japan, India, Burma, Afghanistan, and the Philippines. All these activities are supported entirely by charity and occasional fund-raising events. The Lubavitchers' annual budget for 1984 was around fifty million dollars, according to a spokesman for the group.

Every day, up to three large mail sacks are delivered to the Rebbe's office, at 770 Eastern Parkway—a converted prewar apartment building that houses both the Lubavitchers' headquarters and their main synagogue, and is generally referred to simply as 770—and he is reported to open every letter and read it himself. (This task is made somewhat easier by the fact that he is fluent in ten languages.) A six-man secretariat, composed of rabbis who have been close to the Rebbe for many years, helps him answer his correspondence and also helps with the day-in, day-out business of running the various Lubavitcher institutions and organizations. The Rebbe used to grant audiences to anyone who wanted to talk to him, on Tuesday and Thursday evenings from nine o'clock until long past midnight, but he no longer does so, partly because his health does not permit it and partly because the waiting list got to be several years long. Today, the various matters he might have discussed in person with members of his court or visiting luminaries are discussed in epistolary form. This has not meant a shorter workday; when he leaves his office—around seven o'clock in the winter, at nine or ten o'clock in the summer—he is invariably carrying a large manila envelope filled with unfinished business, which he works on at home. He is rumored to sleep only three or four hours a night. According to one member of the secretariat, he receives a salary, but it is "small" and is meant to cover only household expenses and the like.

Critics of the Rebbe have faulted him for assuming too active a social posture and not allowing his flock enough time for spiritual inwardness. The Lubavitchers insist that the two are interconnected. The Rebbe has also managed to instill a spirit of Messianic urgency in his followers. Jews have traditionally believed that the Messiah will come after a great cataclysm, and Rabbi Schneerson, following his father-in-law's lead in concluding that the Holocaust was just such an event, has stressed the possible imminence of the Messianic era. Behind the zealous efforts of his followers to bring more and more Jews into the fold is the belief that if more people follow God's precepts the earth will eventually become, in the Rebbe's words, "a more habitable place" for the Messiah. Thus, each Sabbath candle lit, each weekday prayer enunciated, each dip into the *mikvah*, or ritual bath, brings the world that much closer to the era when (it is hoped) all mankind will live without war, suffering, or cruelty. Should that world ever arrive, the Hasidim believe, some —they themselves, for example—will be better prepared to live in it, in the same way that rigorously trained athletes are better prepared for the Olympics. The Lubavitchers are not reluctant to say that it just happens that Rabbi Schneerson meets admirably the scripturally ordained requirements for the Messiah as Maimonides codified them in his "Book of Judges;" that is, that he be descended from the family of David (the Rebbe is descended from the Maharal of Prague, Rabbi Judah Loew ben Bezalel, c. 1525-1609, who is believed to be a descendant of David); that he occupy himself with the commandments; that he meditate upon and scrupulously observe all God's precepts; and that he "prevail upon Israel to walk in the way of the Torah and to repair its breaches." According to Jewish tradition, every generation has its potential Messiah. Moses was one, but the Israelites, by worshipping idols, prevented him from fulfilling his destiny. With their "We want Moshiach [the Messiah] NOW" posters and bumper stickers, their outreach programs, their "Call a Hasidic Lecture" telephone hot line, and their impassioned street proselytizing, the Lubavitchers sometimes seem like a team of Messianic advance men. If the present generation does not live to see the paradisiacal era, they appear to be saying, it won't be because we didn't work the precincts.

FOR several months, I had been a visitor in the home of Moshe and Sheina Konigsberg (their names and certain identity-revealing details of their lives have been changed), in Crown Heights. Sheina is from Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, a suburb of Detroit. She is a divorced mother of five who, in mid-life, became a *baalat teshuvah* (a Hebrew term meaning "one who has returned"). Moshe, who also has five children from a previous marriage, comes from a family that has been Hasidic for many generations. His first wife died in 1969.

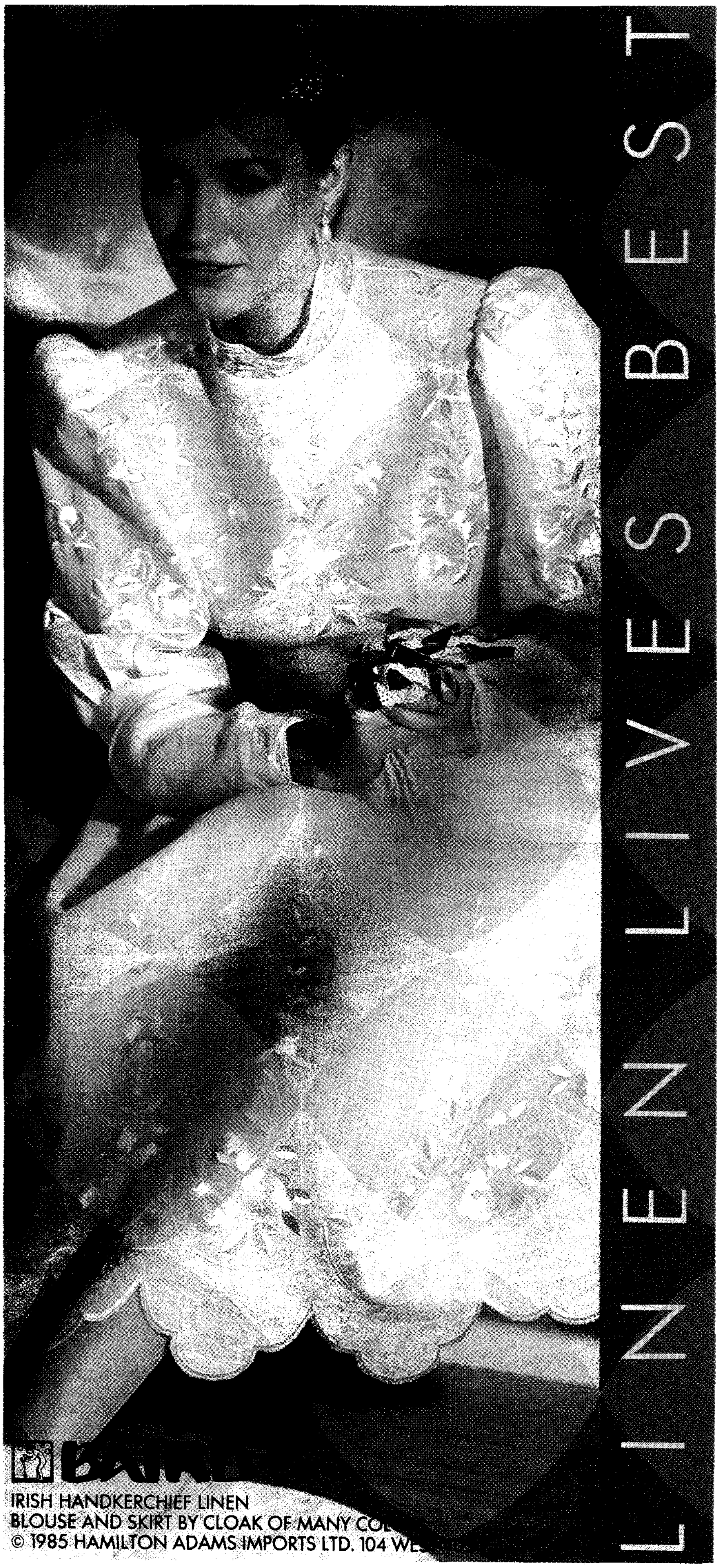
Sheina came to live in the Crown Heights Lubavitcher community after she and Moshe married, in 1975. Unlike most city women, who walk to their local shops, she drives a light-blue air-conditioned Cutlass Supreme (its license plates inscribed with the word "MITZVOT") to her neighborhood markets—a habit left over from her days as a Midwestern suburbanite. She also owns two dishwashers and three ovens (one for meat dishes, one for dairy dishes, one for foods that are neither), a freezer, a washing machine and dryer, a Cuisinart, and a Betamax, which she and Moshe bought chiefly so that they could play tapes of the Rebbe's occasional televised talks. (In the last few years, in order to reach more people, Lubavitchers have broadcast some of the Rebbe's talks, which last for many hours and are delivered in Yiddish, on cable television.) Sheina's robust good looks and stylishly tweedy clothes are rather Midwestern, too, and it is easy to imagine the reminders of various Lubavitcher duties pinned to her kitchen bulletin board reminding her instead to meet a friend for golf, sew tutus for a school play, or buy cheese for a cocktail party.

On a warm spring afternoon not long after a Sabbath I spent at the house, I asked Sheina how she first became interested in Hasidism. We were sitting in her breakfast nook, a round, sunlit, cheerful room filled with plants, magazines, and newspapers—the *Algemeiner Journal* (a Yiddish paper), the weekly *Jewish Press*, and the *Times*. On the windowsill were some twenty charity boxes for Lubavitcher and other causes. Jewish recipe books filled a corner bookcase.

"I guess I started thinking seriously about spiritual matters in 1968," Sheina said. "A cousin of mine—of my ex-husband's, actually—whom I was quite fond of was sending her kids to the same camp I was sending mine to. The camp was in New York State, and since we all lived in Michigan we had to take a plane East; we planned to travel together. Well, my cousin and her daughter and her sister and her sister's boy left for the airport, and my children and I left about five minutes later. On the way, we saw that there had been a terrible accident. A train had collided with a car, and everyone in the car had been killed. It was my cousin's car. That was the turning point of my life. I just couldn't accept their deaths. Later that summer, when I was visiting my children at camp, I met a woman who was driving back to Michigan and wanted company, so I went back with her. She spoke to me about the psychic Edgar Cayce and reincarnation. When I got home, I went to the library and read everything I could about Cayce. In the back of my mind there was always the thought that none of it had much to do with Jews. But the concept of reincarnation seemed to answer many of my questions."

"Did you ever discuss the idea with a rabbi?" I asked.

"Well, yes, I did. I asked the rabbi at my family's synagogue what Judaism had to say about reincarnation, and he said, 'Some people believe in it.' But he didn't, and he didn't much want to pursue the subject. He didn't understand that I was not just making chitchat, and he didn't have any useful direction to send me in. So I went about researching spiritual matters in my own way, as people do nowadays. I studied yoga. I never had any sense that I could benefit just from serving God in the same way that Jews had for centuries, but I *was* becoming a more spiritual person. I even spoke about reincarnation at some public gatherings. One day in 1970, I got a call from someone who belonged to a psychical society, asking me to speak at one of her meetings. I told her that I really wasn't interested in chasing ghosts, but I ended up going, and I took along a tape of a psychic's reading of me. As it happened, a reporter from a local paper was there, and the next day there was a front-page story



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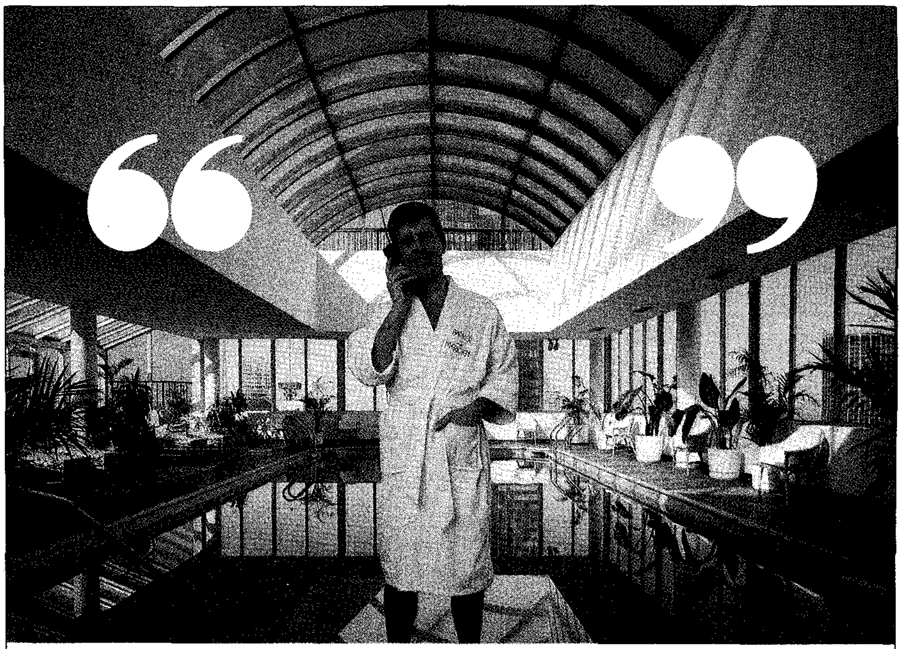

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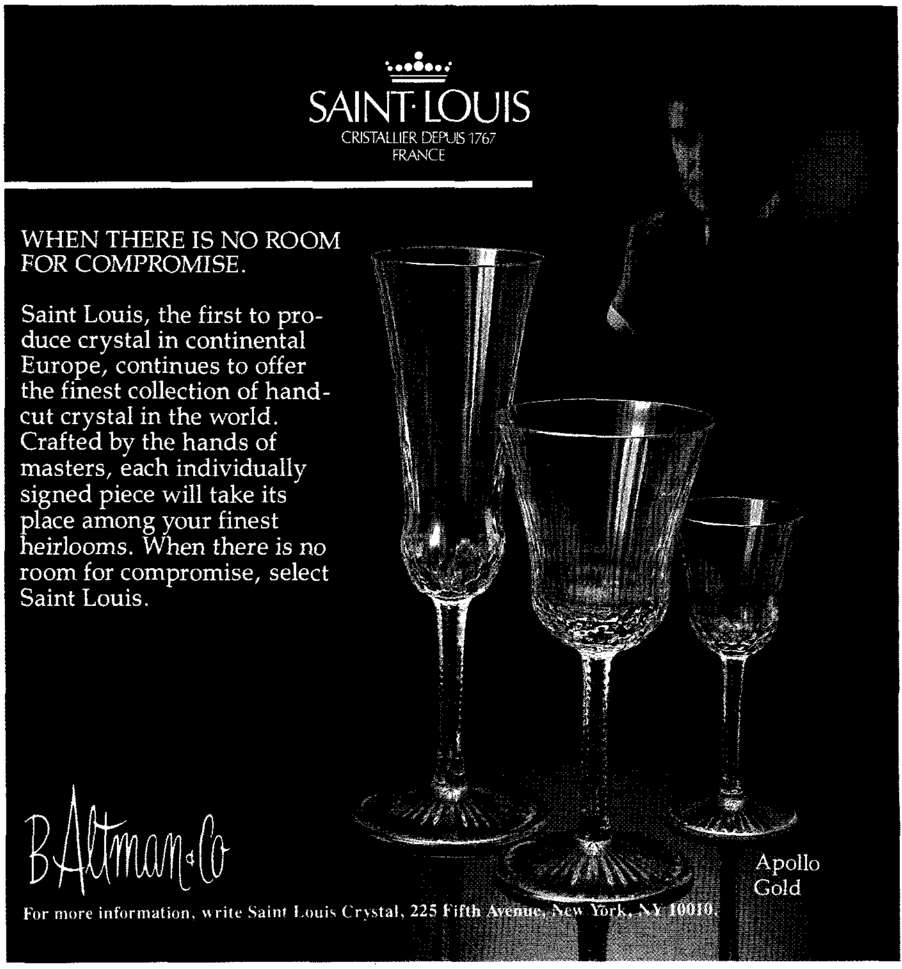

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that really savaged me and all the talk about reincarnation. Oh, boy—how it embarrassed me! Some people made remarks, too, about how Jews shouldn't be fooling around with Edgar Cayce. I still cringe when I think about it. But I feel that all that embarrassment was pushing me in the right direction. That week, I paid a condolence call, and at the house I was visiting an obviously religious woman—she was wearing a wig—came up and asked to be introduced to me, and I thought, Uh-oh, someone else to disapprove of me and scold me for doing these un-Jewish things. I said, 'You're going to tell me that Jews don't believe in reincarnation, and that I shouldn't be wasting my time with such foolishness.' 'Not at all,' said the woman, and she introduced herself and said that she was a Lubavitcher Hasid. She told me, '*We* believe in reincarnation. It's a part of Jewish tradition. The Kabbalah speaks about it, and so does the "Tanya." ' Somehow, I knew at once that my search was over. I said, 'God has sent you to me.'

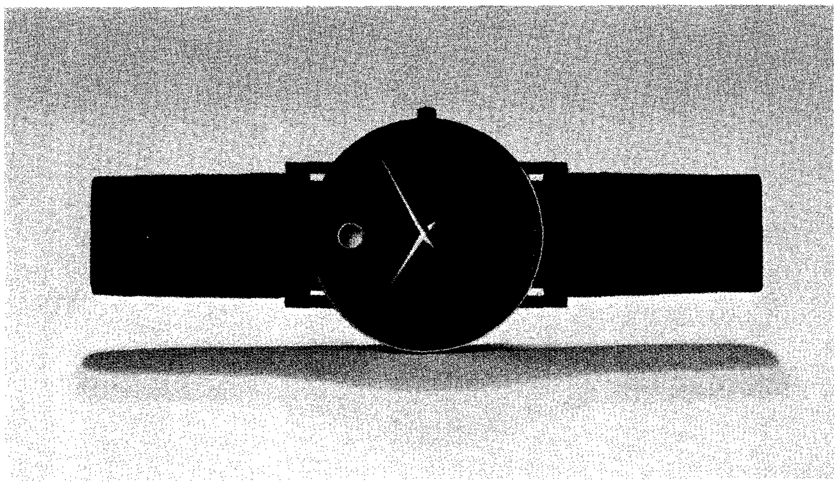
"The woman told me that she was trying to start a local Chabad house, and that a Lubavitcher rabbi was coming to town soon to help organize things. I told her that I'd like to help them with the project, and pretty soon I became friends with a number of Lubavitcher people. They were an extremely diverse group, from every economic bracket. In my own circle of friends, although there were a few exceptions, everybody was fairly well-to-do. Everybody had everything, but it didn't seem to mean much. Their lives centered on the country club and vacations, and, in the case of the men, on their business and real-estate deals. My new friends didn't care about economic status. They were spiritual students, all of them, and the liveliest people I'd ever met. Oddly enough, for all the talk I'd always heard about the separation of the sexes in Hasidic communities, I was impressed by the friendliness of the husbands and wives toward each other. They were skeptical in many ways, too—not at all like the fanatics that people always made Hasidim out to be. It was in one way a terrible period in my life. After nineteen years, my marriage had fallen apart. I was often lonely, and I suffered a lot from self-doubt. But before long my activities with the Lubavitchers became the focus of my life, and I became immersed in learning about Jewish matters from a Hasidic perspective. I realized that I had never really bent my will to the will of God. I decided to try to do that."

"I'm not sure I know what you mean," I said.

"I decided that I wasn't going to have a religion of convenience. I wasn't going to try to evade the commandments by finding rationales for not obeying them. The ritual bath, for example—most Jews think the idea's absurd. Even many members of Orthodox synagogues don't go to them. Nobody talks about the *mikvah*—probably because it's a private kind of ritual, unlike keeping a kosher home. Rabbis tend not to talk openly about it. Parents don't speak of it. People feel it's an archaic custom. In fact, bathing in the *mikvah* is one of the central rituals of Judaism. According to Jewish law, a community is supposed to build a *mikvah* before it builds a synagogue. People say that there just aren't enough baths around—but you can always find one if you try hard enough. Anyway, I became convinced that if I wanted the kindness of God I had to stop shilly-shallying. I was accustomed to eating in good restaurants. I stopped doing that. I didn't go to public places where there was mixed swimming. I stopped turning on the lights on *Shabbos*. My old friends thought I'd gone off the deep end. But I had enough faith to know that what was happening to me was for the best."

"How did your children react to the changes in your life?"

Sheina looked out the window. "Well, you know, my children were formed by that time. They were teenagers, and they didn't like my new way of life at all. They were aware, too, that people were laughing at me, and I think it hurt them. Now the girls are married and have their own families, and my youngest—my son, Chaim—is all grown up, and they accept the fact that this is the way I want to live. But at the beginning they were quite bitter about it. They said I was brainwashed. I think many of the parents of young people who become part of the Lubavitcher community feel the same way. It's as if religious feeling had become a kind of aberration or neurotic symptom. But I was never kept in seclusion, like the Moonies, or removed from everyday life. I came to this life because it seemed a lot more meaningful than the one I had been leading. After my husband and I separated, there was a period of about a year and a half when I



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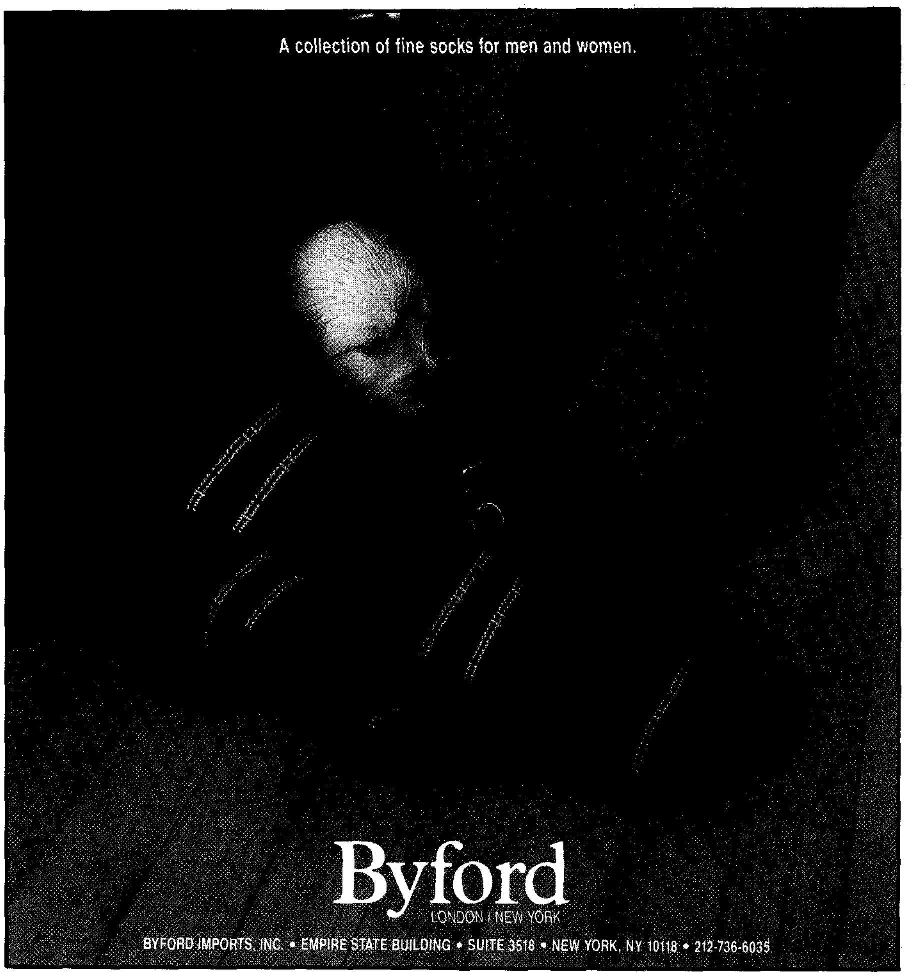

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was rather isolated. The children were with me, but many of the people I knew were put off by my new way of life. For one thing, I was forbidden by Jewish law to date until I got divorced, and living in the suburbs and not being married or willing to date makes you persona non grata. Most of the assimilated people who had been my friends just sort of forgot about me. Then, in the fall of 1973, the Lubavitcher rabbi who had come to Bloomfield Hills suggested that I find a way to have a *Shabbos* house, in the city—a place where I could be with other observant Jews on *Shabbos* and be part of a community. My parents helped me to find a place, and when I began to spend Saturdays in that house my whole life changed. My days of isolation were over. The following year, a second Lubavitcher rabbi came to Detroit. He and his wife and children had hardly settled in when they were evicted. Their landlord said that he objected to so many people coming and going on Saturdays. We thought that he was just inventing a reason to get rid of them because he thought that Hasidim were peculiar, but the rabbi didn't fight the eviction, because it wasn't that great a place. Anyway, they needed a place to stay in a hurry, so I invited them to stay in my *Shabbos* house. It had more than enough room even on Saturdays, when I was there —and, of course, it was empty all week. So they accepted, and before long we became sort of an extended family. I was tremendously impressed by their close-knittedness."

"Were your children there, too?"

"Sometimes my children stayed with me, sometimes they didn't. I was sad that when they did come they didn't really want to participate in the religious rituals. I wished that they had been raised in the passionate kind of way that I saw was part of a thoughtful religious upbringing. But I was resigned to the fact of their independence. I got divorced in 1974, and toward the end of that year the second rabbi, who knew Moshe from Crown Heights, and knew me very well because he'd seen so much of me by then, thought it was appropriate to make a *shidduch*—an arranged marriage. I agreed, and here I am."

"What was your courtship like?" I asked. "Did it seem strange?"

"Well, it certainly wasn't something I did lightly. But it didn't seem strange, because by then the ordinary forms of courtship had begun to seem strange to me. Besides, I trusted the rabbi's knowledge of people, and I was right to. Moshe flew out to meet me in December, and four months later we were married. I saw him three times, and by the third time we'd decided that we suited each other. We saw very quickly that we could make a good life together," she said, smiling, "and we have."

Sheina went on to explain that Moshe had already rejected several candidates proposed to him in the years since his wife died; he hadn't really been ready to remarry. (Contrary to popular opinion, Hasidic men and women frequently reject candidates proposed to them by would-be matchmakers.) But the Rebbe had warned Moshe about mourning too long, and when the rabbi in Detroit told him about Sheina he had the feeling that this was going to be a good match. Before he flew out to Michigan, he wrote to the Rebbe to tell him of his plans. Moshe was then in his forties, but his long white beard made him look a lot older. The rabbi had forewarned Sheina about this, and she says that though it took a bit of adjusting to, it didn't put her off, and she liked him right away. Moshe liked her, too. After that first meeting, they both wrote to the Rebbe, as is the custom, to say that they had "found favor in each other's eyes," and asked for a *brachah*, or blessing, for their courtship. When the Rebbe gave them the go-ahead, Sheina flew to New York, where she stayed with a friend, and talked to Moshe for many hours over a long weekend.

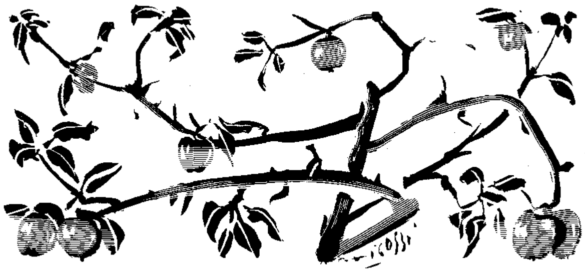
Sheina's acquiescence in the idea of an arranged marriage and her acceptance of the Hasidic form of courtship was probably the most radical step she had taken in her new life. Somewhere along the line, she had jettisoned the dearly held, if ill-defined, contemporary belief in romantic spontaneity, proven sexual compatibility, and tried-and-tested ability to get along in a day-to-day way as the basis for marriage. Her acceptance of a man who had always been Hasidic was also unusual. *Baalei teshuvah* tend to marry other *baalei teshuvah*, it being generally assumed that adjustment to the observant life will be easier if it is shared. But Sheina was ready for total immersion when she met Moshe, and the fact that he was an old-line Hasid merely added to his allure. (Moshe's acceptance of Sheina was equally unusual, since members of Hasidic families with blue-chip lineage like Moshe's do not often marry *baalei teshuvah*, who are considered somewhat tainted by their knowledge of the secular world.) Sheina regarded the *shidduch*, like the other transformations in her life, as a link to a world that would change the way she saw herself as a private person. As she recalled those days, it became clear to me that just as she had accepted the various rules governing how and when she prayed, how she dressed, what food she ate, and what her ethical conduct should be, she accepted, and even liked, the restrictions and protocol of Orthodox courtship; they appealed to her precisely because they were at odds with modern customs and practices. She sensed and was grateful for the fact that while everything was demanded of Orthodox men and women in terms of fulfilling their religious duties, far less was demanded of them than most modern husbands and wives demand of each other. The success or failure of any marriage depends on many complexities, of course, but most outsiders have observed that Hasidic husbands and wives seem surprisingly content; this is partly because they are passionately dedicated to the same suprapersonal goals and partly because they don't ask so much from each other. There are few Hasidim who expect their mates to be unfailingly exciting lovers, forever-youthful admirers, or amateur therapists. If the excitement level has been minimized in Hasidic courtships by relegating Eros to the back seat, so have the subsequent disappointments.

"How many good marriages do you know of in the secular world?" Sheina asked me when I questioned her about the passivity of her role in the initial *shidduch* arrangements. "How successful are people at choosing for themselves?" She looked at me defiantly. "Not very, I think."

After their New York meeting, Sheina and Moshe wrote once again to the Rebbe, and when he sent his blessing for the marriage he suggested that Sheina's children meet Moshe. At the time, Moshe and his two sons and three daughters were living in one half of a small two-family house on Lefferts Avenue which—according to Sheina's daughter Tracy, whom I met on one of her infrequent visits to Crown Heights—was dark, cheerless, and ugly. Tracy, a pretty, healthy-looking blonde with porcelain-pink skin, said that that first encounter with Moshe and New York Hasidic life was hard on everybody. "Mom had warned us about Moshe's white beard, and we could see that he was a nice man, but the boys treated us as if *we* were weird, and their life seemed so airless," she said. "They looked as if they never had any fun. My brother, Chip—Mom calls him by his Hebrew name, Chaim, by the way, but nobody else does—was sent to the yeshiva here on Ocean Parkway for a while to study, but it didn't really take, because he missed the freedom of his life back home."

Despite their mother's protestations, Sheina's children are convinced that she has exchanged a good life for a narrower one. Tracy considers herself "reasonably religious." She lights candles on the Sabbath, keeps a kosher home, and intends to send her two children to Hebrew day school. But she also has non-Jewish friends, and interests unrelated to religion. She thinks that her mother is "just not the same person" she grew up with, and though she loves her, she cannot fathom why Sheina became a Hasid. However, when I pressed her for examples of the interests or activities that her mother had given up whose loss seemed to diminish the quality of her mother's life, she could think of only one—tennis. (When I told Sheina this, she smiled gently at first, and then gave way to a fit of unsuppressible giggles. In between gasps of laughter, she said, "You *can* play tennis, you know. Nothing against it in the rules. Mindy, around the corner, plays. I just haven't had the time.")

After Sheina and Moshe were married, they wrote to the Rebbe again, to ask where he thought they should live. The frequency with which the Rebbe's followers write to him and the crucial role he plays in the important decisions in their lives have frequently been mocked by outsiders, who object to the Rebbe's special status. The Lubavitchers do not much like to talk about the matter on a personal level. On the one hand, their belief in his supernatural powers and in his ability to know what will be



good and bad for them is absolute; on the other, since they pride themselves on being fairly rational people their almost childlike dependence on his clairvoyance is a subject they tend to avoid. Their reticence disappears, however, when they are asked to talk about "miracles" he has worked for others. Then they are delighted to recount stories about how the Rebbe's medical advice—sometimes running contrary to the considered opinion of noted doctors—saved lives; how during the Second World War people who travelled when the Rebbe advised them not to were killed by torpedoes; how the Rebbe's *tefillin* campaign won the Six-Day War; and so on.

The early *tzaddikim*, of course, were considered models of Torah living, and today their descendants—actual or spiritual—are considered holy men in a special way. The late Judaic scholar Gershom Scholem, who spent much of his life illuminating the murky byways of Jewish mysticism, believed that at the beginning of the Hasidic movement the closest possible communion with God was the ideal sought by every Hasid but that as the movement developed, and it became clear that most ordinary Jews had neither the aptitude nor the time to concentrate on reaching Kabbalistic communion with God, this goal was expected to be achieved only by the *tzaddikim*. According to Scholem, for most Hasidim the admonition to "adhere to your sage"—that is, attach yourself to and follow a *tzaddik*—has replaced the earlier goal. Many religious commentators on Hasidism tend to treat this subject a bit nervously. One such author, describing the attitude of the Besht's followers toward him, said that they "*all but* worshipped" him (italics mine). A provocative article by the Judaic scholar Arthur Green that appeared several years ago in the *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* displayed no such skittishness. Mr. Green linked the historian Mircea Eliade's idea of the *axis mundi*, "man's central principle for the organizing of sacred space," with the tradition of the *tzaddik* in Judaism. Green points out that Jews have historically denied that they have any priests, noting that the rabbi is a scholar, legal authority, and teacher. "Every Jew had equal and direct access to God through Torah and prayer," he writes. However, after the destruction of the second Temple, Green believes, the Jews yearned for a central "sacred space" to focus on, and this space was eventually found in the person of the *tzaddik*. "The fact is that postexilic Jews maintained a highly complex and ambivalent attitude toward their traditions of sacred space," he writes. "While longing for a return to the Holy Land continued unabated, the dispersed community of necessity had to have within it various means of more ready access to the sacrality which its great shrine had once provided. Israel wandering through the wilderness of exile was to find that it still had need of a portable Ark of the Covenant. One of the ways in which this was provided was by a transference of *axis mundi* symbolism from a particular place to a particular person: the *tzaddik* or holy man as the center of the world." As Green points out, the *axis mundi* principle is of course a central component of Christianity. It is true that the place where the Besht lived, the places where the early Hasidic leaders lived, the place where the Lubavitcher rebbe lives today are all places of pilgrimage, and although most Hasidim would deny it, Green may be right when he speculates that the *tzaddik* is the closest thing Jews have to a "Hellenistic god-man or quasi-divine hero."

Depending on their bent, Hasidic leaders have either emphasized, exploited, or played down their special role. The Lubavitcher leaders have traditionally deëmphasized it, stressing instead their role as teachers and social innovators. In general, the present Lubavitcher rebbe, like his predecessors, declines to make much of his role as a performer of miracles. But he does not reject the idea of the miraculous. The powers of a rebbe are so great, Hasidim believe, that they continue to exert some influence even after his death. The Lubavitcher rebbe visits his predecessor's grave at least twice a month, it is said, to enlist his spiritual assistance in answering the many letters he receives asking for help, and he has been known to place reading material on the grave before leaving the cemetery. None of his followers would think of disregarding his advice, no matter how arbitrary it might seem. For example, Moshe told me at our first meeting that he had wanted to be a teacher when he was a young man but that he had changed his plans when the Rebbe told him that he ought to be a metal engraver. I thought that the Rebbe had at least given him a good reason for this advice. Later on, I found out that the Rebbe had offered no reason at all. Moshe, who followed the advice anyway, claims that he is happy with his work and that he never gave his change of plans a second thought. When I told him that I found this rather amazing, he just shrugged and said that *tzaddikim* could see things the rest of us couldn't.

d. ehrenberg

When the Rebbe suggested that Sheina and Moshe live in Crown Heights, Sheina was more than willing to accede to the suggestion. She had begun to think of Crown Heights the way the transcendentalists thought of Brook Farm, and she could hardly wait to move there. But it was spring, and she didn't want to disrupt her children's school year, so Moshe took a two-month leave of absence from his job and moved out to Michigan until the summer. Moshe's former mother-in-law, known to her family as Bubbe (*bubbe* is the Yiddish word for "grandmother"), looked after his children while he was away, and the children in Michigan adjusted with varying degrees of difficulty to their exotic stepfather. Sheina's new husband provoked titters everywhere he appeared. She could not have caused more of a sensation if she'd brought home an Eskimo in mukluks. But Moshe took the scandalized glances in his stride, and Sheina gradually grew accustomed to them. When the school year was over, they moved to Crown Heights. Sheina says that the little utopia she discovered in Brooklyn exceeded her expectations, and that each year her life has become more rewarding.

THAT evening, the Lubavitchers were having one of their *farbrengens*, or gatherings, at the synagogue, and Sheina was eager for me to attend. The Rebbe is the only speaker at the *farbrengens*, and he talks extemporaneously and for many hours. Some of these gatherings have been known to last all night. Sometimes they are announced days in advance; sometimes only a few hours' notice is given.

When the word gets out that a *farbrengen* is going to be held, everybody telephones somebody else, and in an astonishingly short time the whole community knows about it. I looked forward to the *farbrengen*, which was to begin at nine o'clock. It would be my first chance to see and hear the Rebbe, and also to see the Lubavitcher community assembled in one place. The Rebbe spoke in Yiddish, I had been told, but in deference to the many visitors who came to hear him a simultaneous English translation was provided, and little transistor radios with earphones would be available at the door.

Walking along Eastern Parkway toward the synagogue, Sheina and I encountered Moshe's two sons, Mendel and Shmuel, who were both bachelors in their early twenties. Before we arrived on the scene, they had been having an animated conversation, which our presence somehow stifled. We all walked along together for a while, but in the absence of their father, who had gone on earlier, they seemed uneasy in Sheina's company and downright uncomfortable in mine, and when we arrived at the synagogue they bounded toward the men's entrance like puppies let off the leash.

All Orthodox synagogues have separate women's and men's sections—a practice that was initiated in ancient times by the priests of the Temple, some say, because they thought that otherwise the congregants would be distracted from the religious ceremonies. Whether the priests' plan proved to be effective then I cannot say, but the women's gallery of the Lubavitcher synagogue, which is upstairs, would surely have given them some second thoughts. About four thousand people were crammed into the synagogue—a space that, by a generous estimate, could have comfortably sheltered two thousand. About a third of those present were women, but the area consigned to them seemed hardly large enough to contain half their number. To enter the women's gallery—two adjoining windowless, airless balconies screened off from the men's section, downstairs, by black Plexiglas panels—one simply allowed oneself to be swept forward by a tidal wave of female Lubavitchers of all sizes, shapes, and ages flowing through the women's entrance. Once inside, the lucky found seats, but most either stood in the aisles or scrambled up onto the narrow back ledges of six stepped rows of wobbly wooden pews

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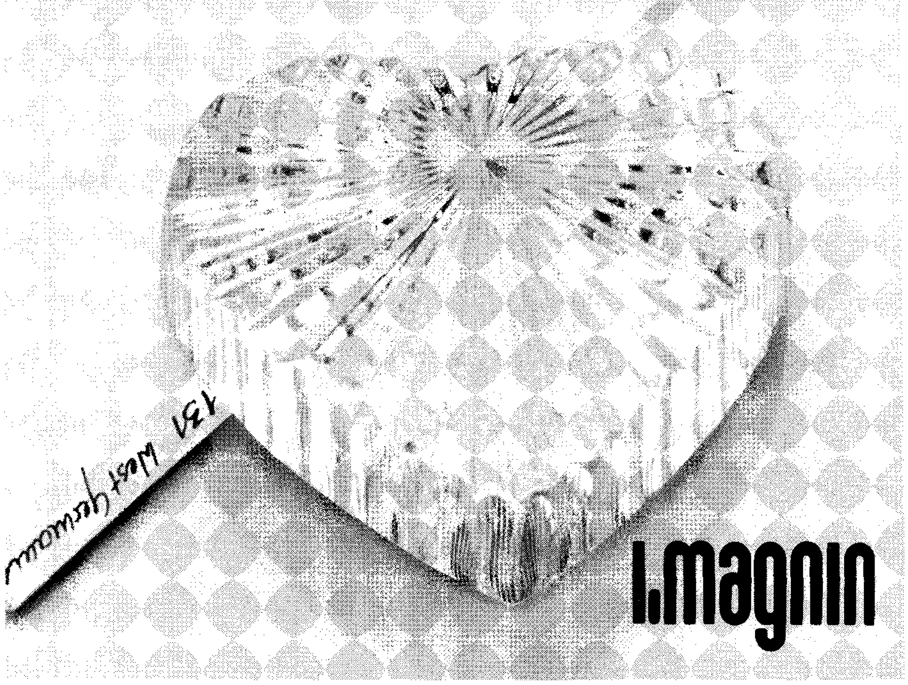

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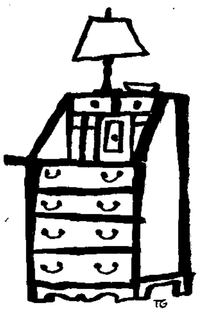
and teetered this way and that to find a spot that would afford a glimpse of the Rebbe, who had not yet arrived. There was a lot of jockeying for position, some fairly alarming shoving, and sporadic skirmishes inspired—it seemed—by territorial disputes. It was a scene that suggested equally the paintings of Hieronymus Bosch and the Times Square I.R.T. station at rush hour. Sheina quickly found her accustomed place—a minute stretch of bench in the left front corner of the gallery—and somehow tucked us both into it. From this vantage point, if you craned your neck down toward the four-inch span that separated the Plexiglas and the rim of the balcony you had a clear, bird's-eye view of the dais and, on it, a long table covered with a white cloth, where the Rebbe always spoke. Below, a black sea of male Hasidim swayed back and forth. Above, a tremendous din. Downstairs, little boys raced between the men's legs and around the dais, and little girls drowsed on their fathers' shoulders. Upstairs, innocent-looking teen-age girls and delicately powdered old ladies mingled with plump young mothers and innumerable babies. A large contingent of grandmothers, their arms moving like steam shovels, popped small morsels of food into the mouths of restless toddlers. The smell of sour milk and wet diapers was faint but pervasive. Knowing that the Rebbe's talks usually went on for hours, mothers came forearmed, and plastic bags filled with apple slices, pretzels, granola bars, and peanut-butter sandwiches were much in evidence. Ignoring the confusion, a few gallant souls, eyes tightly shut, attempted to pray. Sheina exchanged hugs and hellos with people nearby, and settled down with a bright-colored needlepoint wall decoration (a Hebrew alphabet) that she was working on.



After about half an hour, a regal white-bearded figure with a brisk, almost military gait and kindly, penetrating blue eyes entered the hall, and, except for the lip-smacking sound of sucking babies, it fell completely silent. The Rebbe. Like most of the other men, he wore a wide-brimmed black fedora, a long black coat, black trousers, and a white shirt. Unlike most of them, he wore a tie, also black. Taking a seat at the table, in front of several rows of whitebeards, he gazed placidly at his followers and began speaking, in the manner of a teacher picking up the threads of an earlier discussion with his students. No audience-grabbing anecdotes, no uplifting chorale. He spoke for more than four hours, in a voice that never wavered. The children dropped off one by one, but the rest of his followers listened raptly until the end. I listened carefully, too—to the translated version of his talk—but most of what was said went by me in a billowing gray cloud of words. The Yiddish accent of the translator was so thick, the translation itself so poor, and the nature of the discourse so elusive that the few intelligible statements I caught—"A truly free man is one who studies Torah," "We should dissociate ourselves from idolatry, from things that are foreign to Jews"—were unlinkable. The Rebbe, who is in his early eighties, spoke without notes, pausing for a few minutes every half hour to rest and to hold up a small wine-filled Dixie cup and toast his flock. The men also toasted him, holding paper cups aloft and waiting until the Rebbe looked and nodded in their direction before downing the wine. During these brief breaks, the men sang beautiful Hasidic songs that were thematically related to the Rebbe's discourse. Late in the evening, while scanning the expanse of pale faces downstairs during one such interlude, I happened to catch a glimpse of Moshe—hat pushed back on his head, eyes closed, mouth curved in a slight smile—singing. He looked as if he were crooning a lullaby to a baby.

I have attended many *farbrengens* since then. Often, the Rebbe's talks have been well translated (the translations broadcast on cable television, for example, are models of clarity), the themes broad-ranging and graspable. But one has to learn how to listen to them, and for anyone with a secular background this means acquiring a religious one. Like so many Jewish texts, the Rebbe's talks are not aimed at the uninitiated, nor are they readily accessible to those who have a mere passing familiarity with the subjects touched upon—though his followers insist that the Rebbe can be understood on one level or another by everybody. For a non-Yiddish-speaking layman, the constant references to Talmudic sources, persons, and principles, the Yiddish phrases that no translator—however deft—could even attempt to

Anglicize, and the nonsequential, didactic style of discourse can be daunting. During the first two or three *farbrengens* I attended, I found myself constantly straining, but failing, to make out through the thicket of Hebrew and Yiddish references something more than an occasional "thus," "so," or "obviously." One year and many hours' immersion in Jewish texts later, I came away from the *farbrengens* feeling that I'd understood about half of what the Rebbe was talking about.

AFTER the *farbrengen*, Sheina found Moshe outside the synagogue, deep in conversation with a friend. They were discussing the Rebbe's talk in the glowing terms that music lovers might use to express their appreciation of a virtuoso violinist's particularly stirring performance of a much loved piece of music—the music in this case being the Torah. Like true music lovers, they were delighted by the new dimensions they had discovered in a familiar melody, and they marvelled at the player's subtlety and ingenuity. While they continued their discussion, I asked Sheina if the crowding and disorderliness of the women's gallery ever bothered her. I was sure she was well aware of the fact that most of the modern world disapproves of the separate women's gallery; indeed, she gave me a sharp look before she answered.

"Of course I wish it were roomier. I don't like it. But it just doesn't matter that much to me. Despite what everybody believes, the synagogue is not the center of Jewish life. The home is, and I don't think you'll find many women in this community hiding in the shadows in their homes. I never think, Ah, now I am going to the synagogue, where I will focus all my religious feeling. There's a place for religious feeling in everything I do. The rituals I perform and the prayers I say as I go about my daily life keep me from becoming blasé about it. They *force* me to think about the sanctity of the ordinary facts of my existence."

I said that many people thought Hasidic women were limited by their role as priestesses of the home—much as the Victorian woman's pedestal prevented her from entering the larger world or from seeing herself as anything but a household goddess.

"But we're not on pedestals—far from it," she said as we joined a procession of Hasidim strolling home-

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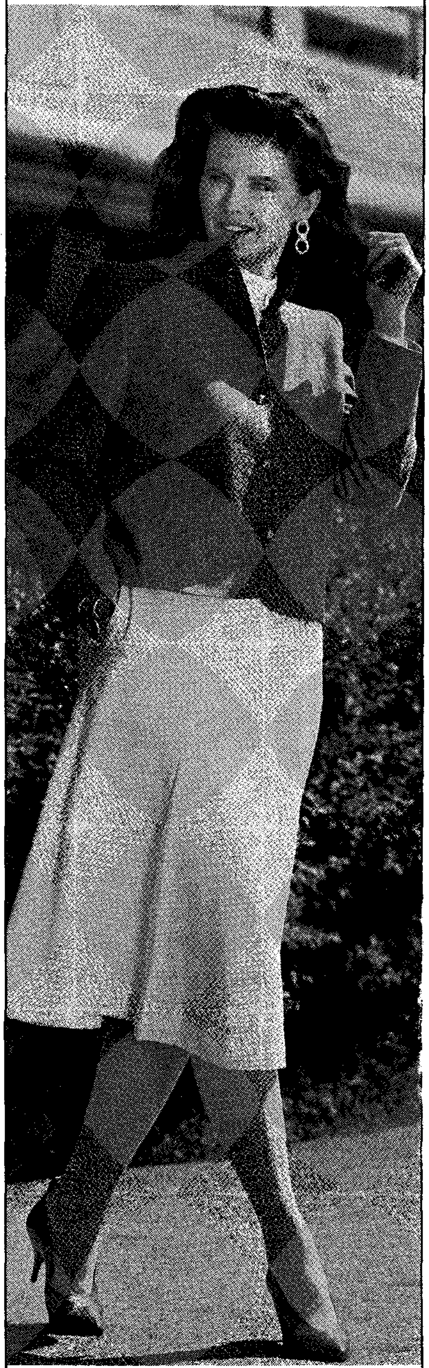

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ward. "Moshe has always played a big role in his children's upbringing—much bigger than most of the fathers I used to know—and since we're both committed to the same ideals, all the practical things I do are part of what he does. We're equals before God; therefore we're equals, period. Victorian men probably believed that their professional lives gave them some sort of edge over their wives, but that's not how we think about things. Moshe's profession isn't the center of his world. His relationship to God is. His family life, the kind of children he has raised, and the degree to which all the little, everyday things in his life are imbued with godliness are what matter to him. And what does being the priestess of the home really mean? It means setting the tone of the place where all the really practical bridges to a religious life are built. A lot of what Hasidic women do is done in the private realm, but in our lives 'private' does not mean 'inferior.' "

An interesting elaboration of this argument is offered by the Orthodox scholar Rabbi Moshe Meiselman in "Jewish Woman in Jewish Law," a heated defense of the way Jewish law treats women. Rabbi Meiselman notes that "the high points in the lives of the major male figures of the Bible occurred in private"—for example, God's revelations to Moses on Mt. Sinai, Jacob's struggle with the angel, Abraham's offering of Isaac—and claims that the Old Testament verse usually cited as an example of Judaic male chauvinism, "The entire glory of the daughter of the king lies on the inside," is simply "a statement of the private nature of the female role and . . . a panegyric on the private nature of the religious experience in general." He compares Jewish heroes and heroines with their Greek counterparts, and contrasts the story of Agamemnon and Iphigenia with that of Abraham and Isaac:

> While Abraham sacrificed Isaac to God, for God, and before God alone, Agamemnon sacrificed Iphigenia for Greece and in the presence of Greece. The essence of the Greek heroic act lay in its public appeal and public nature. There was no glorification of inner heroism, but only of public display and public approval.
>
> Far from the shores of Aulis was the Jewish hero. To the Jew, moral victory for both man and woman is what one does for God and before God, the source of all value. Jewish tradition frowns upon public display, for the moment a human acts in public, his motivation can be tainted by unworthy considerations. . . . An important aspect of the religious-moral act is its privacy, far from the approval of the crowd.

But if women and what they represent were so highly esteemed, I wondered, why should men, as part of their morning prayers, thank God that they were not born women? Rabbinical authorities had steadfastly denied that this was a denigration of women, of course. It was merely a way for men to express thanks, they said, for God's having given them the opportunity to perform many commandments that women are excused from. But then why was it that the morning prayers of women had no parallel expression, since men were also excluded from various female tasks?

As the months went by, however, my starchy notions of how the apparent inequality of Jewish women in Jewish law probably affected them were modified considerably by the obvious strength of the Konigsbergs' marriage, and also by what appeared to be a remarkably energetic, mutually supportive community of women—an almost Amazonian society, too busy to pause to reflect upon its distance from the world of men. Many of the women held jobs outside the neighborhood or took special courses, usually religious or professional ones, at institutions outside the neighborhood, and they seemed to be as eager as their menfolk to discuss and dispute any religious matter, large or small. Sheina often deferred to Moshe on philosophical questions—but, then, she was a relative newcomer to Hasidic philosophy, whereas Moshe had been studying it all his life. Moshe himself constantly deferred to various authorities "who know more about such matters." Like many an old-fashioned European Jewish wife, Sheina helped her husband in his work, but she was hardly a self-effacing drudge, nor was Moshe an impractical, head-in-the-clouds scholar. They both worked hard. Like any metal engraver, he toiled long hours in his shop, on Kingston Avenue. Sheina did a lot of the artwork required, including the designing of medals. As a young woman, she had attended art school briefly, and the upstairs hallways in the Konigsbergs' house were covered with enthusiastically eclectic pictures attesting to that period of her life. While taking a course at the Parsons School of Design a few years ago, she had discovered that she had a gift for calligraphy, and she enjoyed sketching designs. "Look here," Moshe said one day, bringing out a portfolio of Sheina's metalwork designs to show me. He could not have been prouder of the little collection if it had been a signed set of sketches by William Morris. Sheina works in their basement, using a pantograph (a device that copies designs onto metal on a predetermined scale). When she is not working, she is invariably busy with some community project, with preparations for the next religious holiday, or with getting the upstairs bedrooms ready for a steady stream of guests. In her spare time, she studies Yiddish and graphic design.

Any casual observer of the Crown Heights community could see that there was a certain brittleness in the way Lubavitcher men and women treated each other, and, indeed, there were a fair number of women about who appeared exhausted and ground down. These women had a dull, defeated look in their eyes, and they walked with a kind of listless, shuffling gait. But most of the women sped about like charged particles. The caldrons of chicken soup were there, of course, but the women did not seem shackled to them. Had they by force of character and unrelenting busyness worked their way around the system, or was the system misrepresented? Most secular Jews and some religious ones believe that Orthodox Judaism is hopelessly unfair to women. A widely cited condemnation of the way Jewish law treats women appeared some years ago in the magazine *Response*, in an article titled "The Jew Who Wasn't There," by Rachel Adler; it was reprinted recently in a collection of essays, "On Being a Jewish Feminist," edited by Susannah Heschel. Miss Adler's article focusses on the *mitzvot*—the six hundred and thirteen positive and negative commandments that Jews are supposed to fulfill. According to Jewish law, women are excused from fourteen of the positive commandments, among them reading the *Shema* (Deuteronomy 6:4-9 and 11:13-21 and Numbers 15:37-41), a basic statement of Jewish belief reiterated by men every morning and evening in their prayers; learning and teaching Torah; and putting on *tefillin*. In the case of most of these commandments, the law says not that women may not perform them but that they are not obliged to perform them. Two schools of thought exist on why women should be exempt from these and other time-honored duties: one is that women are to be excused from doing anything that takes them away from their life-sustaining obligations at home; the other is that men require extra obligations because of their in-

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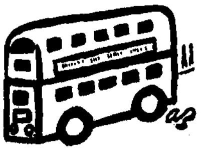
nate aggression and the contact that they have with the secular world. According to the latter view, men must remind themselves more frequently of their spirituality. Not so women, who, as one nineteenth-century rabbi put it, "have greater fervor and more faithful enthusiasm for their God-serving calling," and therefore less need to be reminded of it. A good many religious women, Miss Adler among them, scoff at all this as sophistry. They believe that the exemptions are major impediments to a full religious life—that they rob women of the basic tools of spiritual expression. Women, Miss Adler writes, "have been 'excused' from most of the positive symbols which, for the male Jew, hallow time, hallow his physical being, and inform both his myth and his philosophy."



Plunging into even murkier waters, Rabbi Meiselman claims that the fact that women are disqualified as witnesses in a *beth din*, or religious court, is "one of the areas of Jewish law most misunderstood by feminist critics." The charge that Miss Adler, among others, makes—that the disqualification of women puts them in the same category as deaf-mutes, the insane, minors, pigeon racers (pigeon racing was a form of gambling in Talmudic times), and other powerless or unsavory individuals—is, he says, "absurd." He notes that kings are also not allowed to testify, and asserts that "ability to testify and obligation to testify are interdependent in Jewish law." A king, busy with affairs of state, will not readily be free to testify, so he is excused from this duty lest he fail to carry it out. Similarly, women, with their family obligations, will frequently find it difficult to attend court proceedings, and they, too, are excused from doing so. Rabbi Meiselman also points out that until quite recently all women could disqualify themselves as jurors in the secular court system on the ground that they were women. In practice, women do appear in religious courts in many instances, but not much faith is placed in their ability to get the facts straight. In criminal cases, their testimony is not considered sufficient grounds for conviction. In religious divorce proceedings, too, a woman cannot really determine the outcome. She is not considered free unless she receives a *get*, or writ of divorce, from her husband—a law that has frequently been used to bully women in matters of child custody or finances. Civil courts have tried to intervene on behalf of women in some of these cases, mostly by trying to coerce husbands into giving a *get*, but according to Jewish law only a *get* given because a religious court persuades a husband to accede to its ruling is considered valid.

On the other hand, a woman cannot be compelled to accept a *get*, and the discriminatory attitude toward women as witnesses and in divorce proceedings does not, as is generally thought, embrace the entire corpus of laws regarding women. In monetary matters, for example, a Jewish woman enjoys the same rights as a man, and her legal standing is generally the same. Furthermore, as Rabbi Meiselman observes, a woman "may enter into any contract she wishes . . . acquire and dispose of property . . . be a litigant in all cases of contracts and damages—precisely in the same manner as a man." And even Adler concedes:

> For centuries, the lot of the Jewish woman was infinitely better than that of her non-Jewish counterpart. She had rights which other women lacked until a century ago. A Jewish woman could not be married without her consent. Her *ketubah* [marriage document] was a legally binding contract which assured her that her husband was responsible for her support (a necessity in a world in which it was difficult for a woman to support herself), and that if divorced, she was entitled to a monetary settlement. Her husband was not permitted to abstain from sex for long periods of time without regard to her needs and her feelings. In its time, the Talmud's was a very progressive view. The last truly revolutionary ruling for women, however, was the edict of Rabbenu Gershom [in 1000 A.D.] forbidding polygamy to the Jews of the Western world.

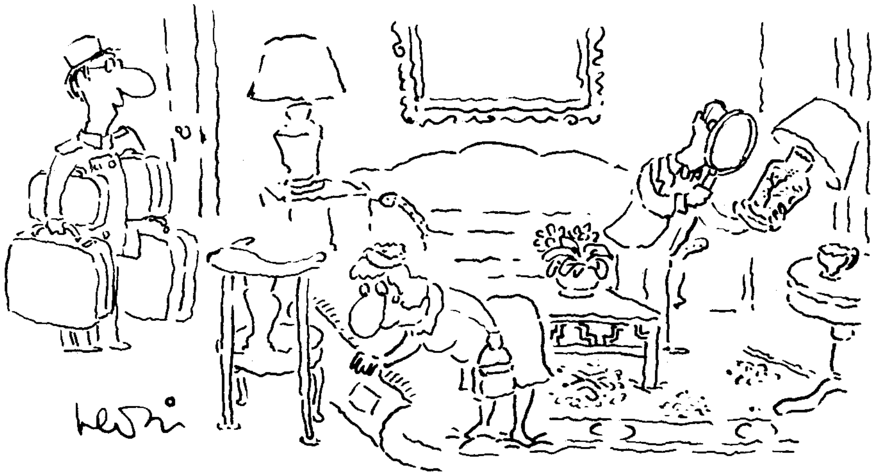
Defenders of Orthodoxy like Rabbi Meiselman are quick to point out that assumptions about status are unrelated to the intent of most Jewish laws, but, whether intended or not, hasn't the apparent favored status of men as scholars and worshippers been interpreted by generations of semi-religious Jews as conferring upon women an inferior role? Wasn't it inevitable that the Jewish woman in her traditionally exalted position as household goddess would become, in a despiritualized context, the butt of the familiar Jewish-mother joke, and inevitable, too, that the proud young Talmud scholar who in Europe was offered food and shelter by total strangers on the Sabbath when he studied away from home would, in a culture that inherited the memory of such customs but no context for them, become the equally familiar (if less joked-about) Jewish prince? Why did so many Jewish readers feel as implicated as they were amused by "Portnoy's Complaint"—a fun-house mirror held up to these two archetypes?

In Hasidic circles, the modernist position on the equality of the sexes and on individual freedom is regarded as misguided at best, a denial of God's will at worst. Sheina remarked to me as we were walking home from the *farbrengen* that she thought the need of modern women to have careers—apart from the economic need—often reflected pressure they felt from society rather than their own inner wishes. "The same thing applies to the separation of the sexes at 770," she said. "The reason people look at us in dismay is that they are applying Christian standards where they are not applicable. We are not striving for togetherness in *shul*. My relationship to God is private. It's not where I sit that counts but the spirit of my prayer. I don't worship once a week and then go home and that's it for religion for the week."

"But surely not all the customs or rules carry the force of law," I said. "Jews have always bowed to changes in custom."

"Changes in custom, yes, but not changes that violate the teachings of the Torah. Conservative and Reform synagogues can hire women rabbis and consider it a change of custom. But the Torah forbids women to touch the Torah when they are menstruating, so how can you have a woman rabbi officiating if she can't touch the Torah? Moshe told a story the other day that applies to what we're discussing—about a little boy who was playing chess with his father. The father had just set up the chessboard, and the little boy said to him, 'Why must the board always be just like that? Why couldn't we move the kings and rooks over here, and the pawns over there?' And the father answered, 'We could do those things, but then the game wouldn't be chess anymore.' "

FROM the earliest pre-kindergarten years, Lubavitcher boys and girls attend separate schools. Although the education of women is considered important, and Lubavitcher schools maintain high standards, it is probably fair to say that there is no serious expectation that the girls' schools will turn out scholars of distinction. The girls learn about the Bible, about the



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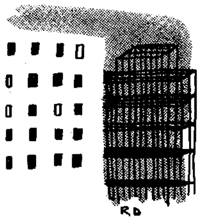
religious holidays, and about the dietary laws. When the boys get old enough to learn Hasidic philosophy, they study it for about three hours a day; the girls study it for forty-five minutes. Both boys and girls attend school six days a week, Sunday through Friday (Friday is actually a half day, because of the Sabbath). The boys are on this six-day schedule from the age of four on, but—despite the fact that girls are known to mature earlier than boys—the girls do not attend school on Sunday until they are six. The high-school boys' day ends at nine-thirty, the girls' day at four-forty-five. Though most of the local boys go on to various yeshivas—mainly to the Rabbinical College of America, a modern, spacious Lubavitcher campus in Morristown, New Jersey—girls who wish to pursue their studies attend "seminary" in another wing of the same shabby, overcrowded building they sat in when they were in kindergarten. Like the kindergarten girls, they, too, are exempted from studying on Sunday, and while their brothers (many of whom are on their way to ordination) are expected to be at their studies until about nine-thirty in the evening, the second-year girls'-seminary students are finished with their studies at twelve-thirty in the afternoon.



At Machon Chana, a Lubavitcher yeshiva for *baalot teshuvah*, on Eastern Parkway, the day is longer and the work load more intensive; the students, women of all ages and backgrounds, begin at eight-thirty in the morning and finish at nine-thirty at night. The hours are long because, as one of the teachers put it, "they have so much catching up to do." I sat in on a class one afternoon. The teacher was a plump fellow with nervous gestures and rumpled clothes, who gazed into the middle distance most of the time with an expression that might have been interpreted as either profound concentration or cosmic boredom. The class was interpreting a bit of Biblical text. The women stumbled quite a lot over the Hebrew words, but they offered their exegeses avidly and sometimes lengthily, trying hard to win the approval of their distracted mentor. I talked to a number of them during a lunch break in the basement; an aura of almost preternatural fatigue hung over the group like a chill fog. The Rebbe takes a keen interest in the school (which has been around since 1972 and is named after his mother) and in the well-being and education of *baalei teshuvah* in general. The dormitory that the younger *baalot teshuvah* live in is on President Street not far from his house. A rambling mahogany-panelled mansion, it is one of the most elegant houses on the block.

I spoke with the head of the United Lubavitcher Yeshivot, an elementary school for boys, on Ocean Parkway, and with the head of Beis Rivkah, the girls' school, on Crown Street. The former stressed the school's high scholastic standards, and the latter stressed the ways the school prepared its students for life. Both administrators, however, while they may feel differently about their students' futures, expressed their institutional aims in nearly identical language: they wanted their charges to wake up in the morning, eat, learn, and go to sleep like Jews. In Lubavitcher classrooms, it is the Rebbe, not George Washington, whose portrait hangs above the blackboard. Both schools have accredited academic programs, but secular subjects are taught only in the afternoon. The morning hours, when the students' minds are the freshest, are devoted to religious studies. Token curricular nods are made in the direction of fresh air and exercise, and some of the boys have what is perceived by the faculty as a kind of raffish interest in national sports ("Berel, here, knows all about baseball. This kid is on the ball," the principal of the boys' school said to me in one of the classrooms. "Berel, tell this lady who has the highest batting average in the American League"). But, talking to several of them, I discovered that, even among the young, certain American folkways, such as cheerleading, varsity competitions, and the idolizing of actors, rock singers, or sports figures, are considered silly—*goyim naches* ("Christian pleasures").

Watching a line of little boys following their red-headed teacher to the cafeteria for lunch, I wondered, not for the first time, why so many Hasidic children (and Hasidic adults, for that matter) look pale and sickly. No one, to my knowledge, has ever provided a satisfactory answer to this question. It may be because they spend so much time indoors—like the little Russian-Jewish boys described by Isaac Babel, who saw the sun only when they crossed the street for their violin lessons. It may be their diet, which is long on fats and carbohydrates and short on raw fruits and vegetables, or it may be because they exercise so little. I had also observed that many Hasidim seemed to marry their cousins, or people whose families came from the same part of Europe that their own ancestors hailed from, and I wondered if this amounted to excessive inbreeding. A doctor I talked with at Albert Einstein Hospital, who counsels many Jewish couples who are concerned about bearing a child with Tay-Sachs disease, dismissed the idea. "I'm not sure that if they dressed and groomed themselves more like everybody else they'd look all that different from other people," he said.

I was not permitted to visit any of the schools for older boys—although I was quite keen on seeing in action the traditional yeshiva custom of having the boys study in pairs, constantly questioning and challenging each other—because the official in charge of such matters thought that a visit from a woman would be too "disruptive." But shortly after my visit to the United Lubavitcher Yeshivot I paid a visit to Beis Rivkah. The boys' school is modern and well equipped, but the Beis Rivkah school building is decrepit, drafty, and charmlessly old, with a dark, cavernous lobby that calls to mind English bomb shelters. Most of the teachers are women. In one classroom, however, an older man with a German accent was discussing feminism with a class of fourteen-year-olds. In a voice heavy with scorn, he was deprecating the average secular woman as a self-hating, insecure, lonely creature who feels compelled to prove her worth to the world by finding some meaningless work that will give her life definition. But were these women happy with their lives, he asked, and he answered his own question with a derisive smile. Except for one or two girls who were dozing, the children shook their heads and matched his smile with knowing smiles of their own. This was one of the most popular teachers in the school, my guide had whispered to me as we entered the classroom.

Moshe's youngest daughter, Bassy, herself an alumna of Beis Rivkah, was now a teacher there, and she invited me to spend the morning with her class. She dimpled when she saw me in her doorway, and, turning toward her charges, two dozen five-year-olds, she

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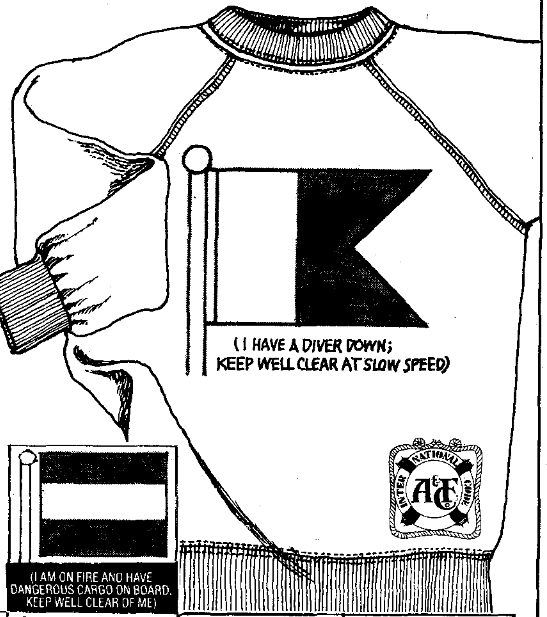
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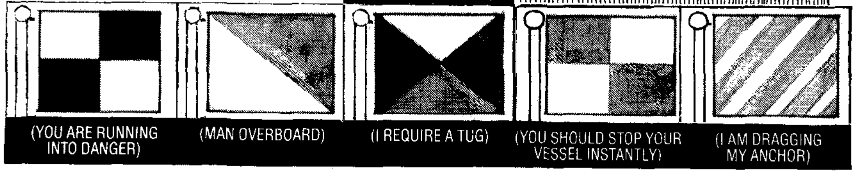
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asked, "Children, what do we do when an older person comes into the room?" The girls scrambled to their feet and shouted, "SHALOM!" After that, they sang a song, in Yiddish, about giving a charity penny to a little girl. Viking mariners could not have sounded lustier. They were almost bellowing, and when they went on to a song about the pleasures of doing good deeds, to the tune of "Frère Jacques," the singing became, if possible, even more enthusiastic. Bassy smiled benignly at them. The room was decorated with cutout Hebrew letters, numbers illustrated by symbols and artifacts of Jewish life, and pictures of Biblical scenes. Semi-opaque paper had been taped to the windows to keep drafts out. It was a shabby but cheerful room, equipped with most of the standard things—blocks, dolls, paints, puzzles—that please young children. The girls wore dressier clothes than nursery-school or kindergarten children usually wear, but this did not appear to cramp their style.

"What do we do every morning when we get up?" Bassy asked them.

"WE PRAY!"

"And how do we hold our hands?"

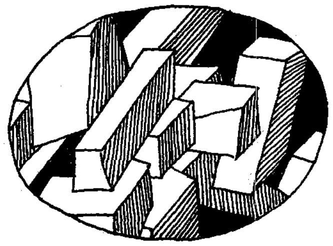
"TOGETHER!"

"What are we praying for? One at a time, now—raise your hands. Yes, Chanah?"

"We are thanking God for giving us our soul back."

"Very good, children, very good."

The classroom routine was a curious mixture of learning by rote, praying, lackadaisical play, and wildly unbridled singing. Bassy was far more tolerant of her pupils' high jinks than many a modern teacher would be. On the other hand, when the din got to be too much she exacted instant silence by ringing an enormous wooden-handled brass bell—a device that most modern teachers would probably consider as outdated as the rack.



Bassy worked only a half day. The children would be with another teacher in the afternoon. As we escorted them down to the lunchroom, I asked an elfin dark-skinned girl wearing Mary Janes and pearl earrings what she would like to be when she grew up. She pretended to think about the question, then grinned broadly: "A mother." A chorus of "Me too"s echoed down the hallway. As it happened, I'd asked the same question of a kindergarten class at the boys' school. None of the boys wanted to be firemen, policemen, or astronauts. Their equally unanimous answer was "A father."

On the way home from school, Bassy and I talked a little about her student days. She had enjoyed school, she said, and didn't agree with those who, like Sheina's daughter Tracy, said that being shut off from the world so much did young women harm. It seemed unimportant to her that she had not been allowed to dance, swim, take part in sports, or associate with boys.

"You didn't wish you could have seen boys more when you were a teenager?" I asked. (She had just turned twenty.)

A bored shrug. "It was no problem. My friends and I had a great time. We didn't worry about whether the boys liked us or didn't like us. We didn't get depressed when a boy didn't call us up, and we didn't have to think, What should I be? Who should I be? We just studied what we had to study. I know that Tracy enjoys her life, but I want different things from mine. The main difference is that mine is one of religious commitment, discipline, and restraint."

I asked her if she ever did anything just for fun.

"Well, I play the piano a lot. I still give piano lessons to about eight girls, and there are the Lubavitcher girls' conventions that take place every year. They're big money-raising events that we put on plays for. Sometimes they're in New York, sometimes they're out of town. We stay up all night getting ready for them, and we get a great feeling of closeness working hard together. Sometimes we go to hospitals. And I've been going to Lubavitcher summer camps, first as a camper, then as a counsellor, since I was seven. I've been to camps in upstate New York, in Michigan, in California, and in Israel. I made good friends in camp."

"Were you paid when you worked as a counsellor?"

Bassy seemed surprised by the question, as if the idea had never occurred to her. "No, we worked as volunteers."

I had not been in the school when the science teacher was there, and I wondered how the Lubavitchers, who believe that the world was created some fifty-seven hundred years ago, handled the subject of evolution. I asked Bassy about it.

"We skip it," she said as we walked up the steps of the Konigsbergs' house. "We don't have to take the biology Regents. We take, say, the chemistry one instead, so we don't put ourselves in the position of giving an answer that we consider right but the Board of Regents would say was wrong."

"Are you ever troubled by the scientific evidence that points to the earth's being billions of years older than you are taught it is?"

"Not at all," she said, turning the key in the lock. "Scientific theories are always being revised and rejected. Who is to say who's right? Have you read the Rebbe's letter about evolution? I think that would answer your question better than I can."

Later that week, I obtained a copy of the letter Bassy had mentioned. It was written in 1961 by the Rebbe to a friend who, unlike Bassy, was troubled because what he believed to be scientific truth about the age of the world was inconsistent with the Torah view of the matter. The letter, which has faint echoes of the Rebbe's Sorbonne days under the tutelage of Cartesians, has become the Lubavitchers' polestar on the subject. The Rebbe begins by saying that trying to reconcile science and the Torah is a hopeless task, since "science formulates and deals with theories and hypotheses, while the Torah deals with absolute truths," noting that "these are two different disciplines, where 'reconciliation' is entirely out of place." He goes on to attack the world's docile acceptance of scientific theories as fact, and points out that most scientific theories are based on interpolation and extrapolation, and that "all speculation regarding the origin and age of the world comes within the second and weaker method, that of extrapolation." He continues:

> It is small wonder (and this, incidentally, is one of the obvious refutations of these theories) that the various "scientific" theories concerning the age of the universe not only contradict each other, but some of them are quite incompatible and mutually exclusive, since the maximum date of one theory is less than the minimum date of another.
>
> If one accepts such a theory uncritically, it can only lead him into fallacious and inconsequential reasoning. Consider, for example, the so-called evolutionary theory of the origin of the world, which is based on the assumption that the universe evolved out of existing atomic and sub-

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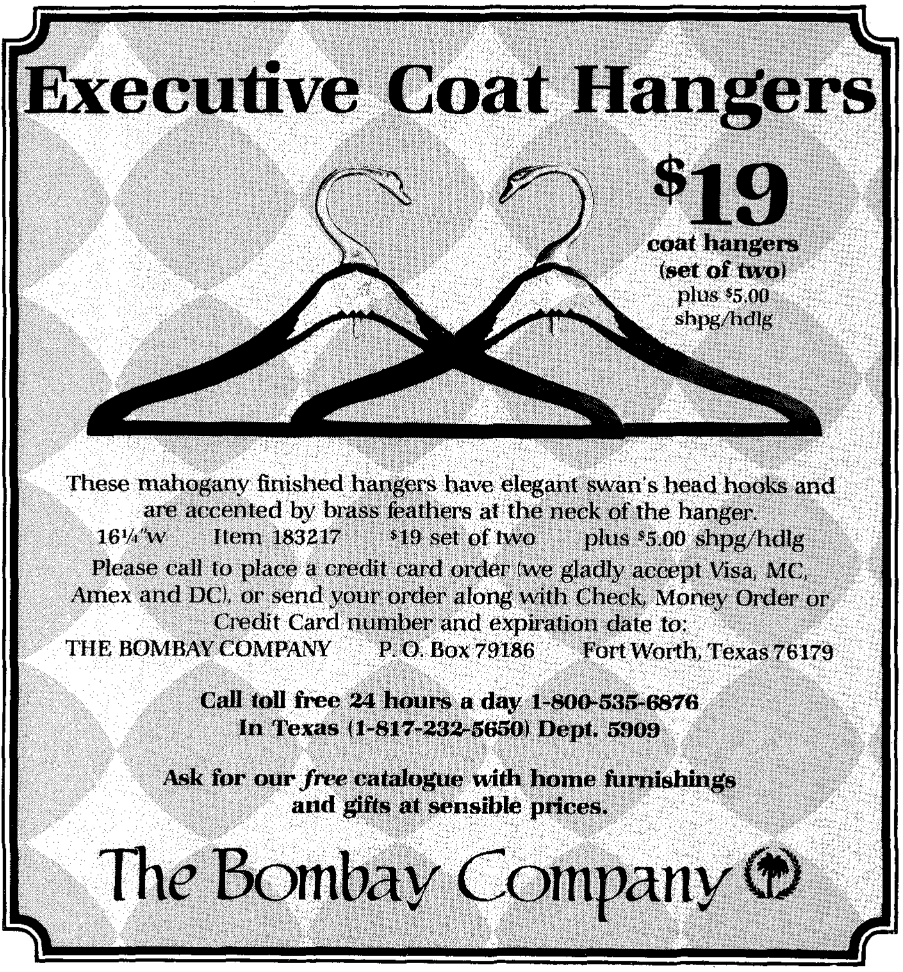

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> atomic particles which, by an evolutionary process, combined to form the physical universe and our planet, on which organic life somehow developed, also by an evolutionary process, until "homo-sapiens" emerged. It is hard to understand why one should readily accept the creation of atomic and subatomic particles in a state which is admittedly unknowable and inconceivable, yet should be reluctant to accept the creation of planets, or organisms, or a human being, as we know these to exist. . . .
>
> In view of the unknown conditions which existed in "prehistoric" times, conditions of atmospheric pressures, temperatures, radioactivity, unknown catalyzers . . . conditions, that is, which could have caused reactions and changes of an entirely different nature and tempo from those known under the present-day orderly processes of nature, one cannot exclude the possibility that dinosaurs existed five thousand seven hundred twenty-two years ago, and became fossilized under terrific natural cataclysms in the course of a few years rather than in millions of years, since we have no conceivable measurements or criteria of calculations under those unknown conditions.

I was unsurprised to learn that the Rebbe did not feel his argument was weakened by the fossil finds of our century. But his interpretation of the fossil evidence—which bears a remarkable similarity to that of the nineteenth-century British fundamentalist minister and naturalist Philip Gosse, whom I somehow cannot imagine that he had read—must be one of the boldest attempts ever made to fit Scripture and geology together:

> Even assuming that the period of time which the Torah allows for the age of the world is definitely too short for fossilization (although I do not see how one can be so categorical), we can still readily accept the possibility that G-d created ready fossils, bones or skeletons (for reasons best known to Him), just as He could create ready living organisms, a complete man, and such ready products as oil, coal, or diamonds, without any evolutionary process. . . . The question Why create a fossil? is no more valid than the question, Why create an atom? . . . If the theories attempting to explain the origin and age of the world are so weak, how could they have been advanced in the first place? The answer is simple. . . . It is a natural human ambition to be inventive and original. To accept the Biblical account deprives one of the opportunity to show one's analytic and inductive ingenuity. Hence, disregarding the Biblical account, the scientist must devise reasons to "justify" his doing so, and he takes refuge in classifying it with ancient and primitive "mythology" and the like, since he cannot really argue against it on scientific grounds.
>
> If you are still troubled by the theory of evolution, I can tell you without fear of contradiction that it has not a shred of *evidence* to support it. On the contrary, during the years of research and investigation since the theory was first advanced, it has been possible to observe certain species of animal and plant life of a short life-span over thousands of generations, yet it has never been possible to establish a transmutation from *one species into another*, much less to turn a plant into an animal. Hence such a theory can have no place in the arsenal of empirical science.
>
> The theory of evolution . . . actually has no bearing on the Torah account of Creation. For even if the theory of evolution were substantiated today, and the mutation of species were proven in laboratory tests, this would still not contradict the possibility of the world having been created as stated in the Torah, rather than through the evolutionary process. . . .
>
> Needless to say, it is not my intent to cast aspersions on science or to discredit the scientific method. Science cannot operate except by accepting certain working theories or hypotheses, even if they cannot be verified, though some theories die hard even when they are scientifically refuted or discredited (the evolutionary theory is a case in point). No technical progress would be possible unless certain physical "laws" are accepted, even though there is no guaranty that the "law" will repeat itself. However, I do wish to emphasize, as already mentioned, that science has to do only with *theories* but not with certainties. All scientific conclusions, or generalizations, can only be probable in a greater or lesser degree according to the precautions taken in the use of the available evidence, and the degree of probability necessarily decreases with the distance from the empirical facts, or with the increase of the unknown variables. . . . If you will bear this in mind, you will readily realize that there can be no real conflict between any scientific theory and the Torah.

IT is probably safe to say that no aspect of Orthodox Jewish life has so piqued the curiosity of interested outsiders as the so-called Laws of Family Purity—the rules that govern sexual relations between men and women. "Men and women" in this context means husbands and wives. There are no Jewish sexual laws that apply to unmarried men and women except those which forbid sexual congress between them and which help insure that transgressions will not take place. Like most people, I knew that Orthodox married women did not have sexual intercourse with their husbands while they menstruated or for a week afterward. I also knew that they immersed themselves in the *mikvah* at the end of this time and that the immersion officially ended what I had heard described as their period of "uncleanness." To the extent that I'd thought about it, which wasn't much, it sounded like some unwholesome misogynist ritual from the pages of "The Golden Bough."

There are three categories of Jewish law: "judgments," "witnesses," and "decrees." "Judgments" are the moral

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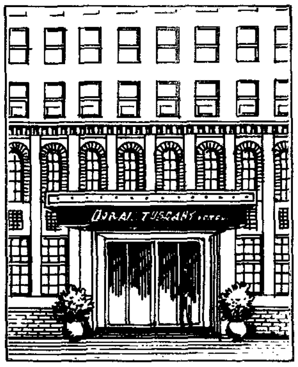

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and ethical laws—the proscriptions against killing, cheating, stealing—that are supposed to enable people to live together in harmony; "witnesses" are the rituals and holidays that remind Jews of the central truths in their lives; and "decrees" are those laws, like the rules pertaining to the eating of kosher foods, for which no explicit reason is given but which are to be obeyed as commandments of God anyway. The last is the category into which the ritual bath falls. Jews are simply supposed to observe the decrees, whether they understand the reason for them or not. These are the practices most vulnerable to scorn and rejection, and they have, in fact, been rejected by most of the Jewish world. It is rare to find a *mikvah* (the word is used for both the bath and the bathhouse) in modern cities and towns, even those that boast a sizable Jewish population.

I had always been dimly aware that converts to Judaism were required to immerse themselves in the bath, but I didn't understand why, and I was surprised to learn that Hasidic men regularly immerse themselves before the Sabbath and on other occasions as well, and that pots and pans, dishes, and cutlery manufactured by a non-Jew are immersed before religious Jews use them in their homes. The original consecration of Aaron and his sons as *kohanim*, or priests, involved immersion, and before the high priest entered the Holy of Holies (the chamber in the ancient Temple where the Ark containing the stone tablets from Sinai was kept) he immersed himself. Neither Aaron nor the high priest was considered impure or unclean. Rather, each underwent a change of status. The same is true of the convert, who enters the *mikvah* because it is a place of spiritual cleansing and rebirth. According to tradition, a convert is actually a Jewish soul that happened to get caught in a Gentile body, and immersion in the *mikvah* merely frees that soul to go about its business.

Aryeh Kaplan, a popular young Orthodox rabbi who died several years ago, conducted study groups in his house, in the Flatbush section of Brooklyn, during which he tried to convey, among other things, the beauty of the *mikvah* in mystical terms. His reflections on the subject can be found in a slim, closely argued volume called "Waters of Eden: The Mystery of the *Mikvah*." Kaplan discusses the Hebrew words *tomeh*, usually translated as "unclean," though it

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can also mean “impure,” and *tahor*, usually translated as “clean,” though it can also mean “pure,” as they are applied to those who immerse themselves in the *mikvah*, and he stresses the misunderstanding that the more common translation has caused. Neither men who bathe in the *mikvah* before the Sabbath nor postmenstrual women are considered “dirty” in the way most people imagine. Men shed whatever taint they may have acquired in the workaday world when they immerse themselves before the Sabbath; women purify themselves as an acknowledgement of the holiness of sex. The Talmud says that all water has as its source the primordial river that flowed out of Eden, so when someone bathes in the *mikvah* “he is reëstablishing his link with Eden,” Kaplan writes. He likens the *mikvah* itself to a womb: “The womb is a place that is completely divorced from all concepts of . . . uncleanness. A baby enters the world in complete purity, and there is no way in which he can be defiled while in the womb. Thus when an individual enters the *mikvah*, he leaves all uncleanness . . . behind and emerges as a new, purified person.”

I was interested in knowing what Sheina thought about the *mikvah* but was reluctant to discuss with her what seemed like such a private matter. As it happened, the subject came up naturally one day. Sheina told me that she and a friend had talked for years about trying to replace the crumbling old women's *mikvah*, on the corner of Albany Avenue and Union Street, with a more modern and better-equipped one. Eventually, they had interested the women of the neighborhood in making a new *mikvah* a community project, and now, after months of discussions, planning, and fund-raising, and after receiving the obligatory go-ahead from the Rebbe, the *mikvah* was finally under way. Sheina wanted to show me how it was coming along. The new *mikvah* was to incorporate the old building, which was to be gutted, and a brownstone next door to it. There were to be three baths in the new complex, all built to rigorous religious specifications. They would look something like the small indoor pools that are built next to saunas in Scandinavia. Like all *mikvahs*, they would be fed by two sources of water: in each of the baths, two hundred gallons of rainwater would commingle with ordinary city water. It is the rainwater that gives a bath its legitimacy as a *mikvah*. Renovation of the brownstone had already begun. Gleaming tiles covered the walls, and the dressing rooms and showers were being installed. Rolls of carpeting were piled in the corridors. The Lubavitcher laborers, wielding trowels and hammers, looked like displaced M.I.T. philology professors. They greeted Sheina cheerfully and spoke to her about the progress of the work. From the beginning of the project, she had been more or less in charge of seeing that things went along smoothly, and it was apparent that she was immensely proud of the new *mikvah*. As we left, she glanced up at the old building, with its sombre “Ritualarium” lettering etched above the doorway—its baths were still in use while the new ones were being completed—and said, “We want women to like coming here. It's a beautiful ritual, and we think it deserves a welcoming setting.”

“I'd like to know a bit more about how it affects you,” I said.

Sheina said that she had a doctor's appointment in Queens (for months she had been waging a valiant battle, with the help of a nutrition expert, to shed some pounds, but as soon as she lost a few a particularly lavish Sabbath meal would render the previous weeks' efforts meaningless) and then an appointment with the neighborhood *sheitl macher*, or wigmaker, but that she'd be happy to continue the discussion if I wanted to come along for the ride. I agreed, and as we drove along Eastern Parkway, past blocks of once elegant apartment buildings and boarded-up brownstones, Sheina talked about the Laws of Family Purity.

“You know, I suppose, that according to Jewish law women may not have sexual relations or any physical contact whatever with their husbands while they menstruate or for a week afterward. This may strike outsiders as unnatural and a strain on a marriage, but I think it is fair to say that no Orthodox couple I've ever known thinks of it that way. In the first place, it's a time when couples stress all the other ways that they have of communicating with one another, and, in the second, most people find that abstinence whets their sexual appetite, so the boredom that many marriages suffer from has no chance to develop.”

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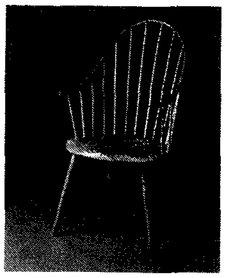

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are not discouraged from enjoying sex, and have as part of their inheritance a wide variety of quite specific Talmudic and post-Talmudic exhortations to enjoy the act of love, complete with Masters-and-Johnson-like suggestions on how to go about it. One can only assume that they respond to these tracts as scrupulously as they respond to all the other advice of their sages. Much of the literature on the subject has as its theme the obligation of husbands to give their wives pleasure. This excerpt from the "Epistle of Holiness," by Rabbi Moses ben Nahman, a thirteenth-century mystic, is illustrative: "Therefore, engage her first in conversation that puts her heart and mind at ease and gladdens her. . . . Speak words which arouse her to passion, union, love, desire, and eros. . . . Never may you force her, for in such union the Divine Presence cannot abide. . . . Win her over with words of graciousness and seductiveness. . . . Hurry not to arouse passion until her mood is ready."

"I don't know if it's the separation, or the beauty of the ritual—maybe it's both—but I feel like a new bride every month," Sheina continued. "How many married women can say that?"

"Why are the rules so strict about *all* physical contact between husband and wife in this period? Why, for example, are you not even allowed to pass a table utensil to Moshe?"

"The prohibition against men and women cohabiting while a woman menstruates comes from the Book of Leviticus. But our rabbis spelled out the ways such a prohibition could best be carried out in the Talmud tractate 'Niddah' ["removed," or "separated"] and in the Code of Jewish Law. Most of the customs are there for the same purpose—to keep the flames of passion banked for a while." Sheina used this expression without the slightest note of irony in her voice.

"Nowadays," she went on, "the casual touch of a woman's hand or the gesture of sitting on a woman's bed would probably be considered ridiculously unstimulating to a lot of people. But to men and women who don't take casual physical contact for granted the most ordinary acts can be erotic. We have an extremely low divorce rate in this community. No one has really counted, but I'd say that it's less than five per cent. I know that people think it's low because of the social stigma attached to divorce, but that isn't it at all. I really believe that marriages are stronger here—certainly sturdier than

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most I've seen in the outside world."

After leaving the doctor's office, we drove back to Crown Heights and parked the car near the apartment building where the wigmaker's shop—a tiny two-bedroom apartment—was situated. The proprietress, a small, talkative woman who was born in the Carpathian Mountains, led Sheina over to a chair set in front of a wall mirror and brought out various red wigs for her to try on. A sleepy-looking, rosy-cheeked young woman who had just arrived from Paris to attend her brother's wedding was also trying on wigs. When she and Sheina removed their wigs, they both looked strange; there was something about their ungroomed, short-clipped hair that I found extremely unsettling. It was, I realized almost instantly, the way the two roughly shorn heads evoked concentration-camp photographs. In fact, the true mood of the room—with its gold-and-white filigree wallpaper, drawn window shades, soft golden light, wigs mounted on stands, and happily chattering women—was suggestive of an Offenbach operetta and not at all conducive to morbid thought. Every wig had its own style name, and the women referred to them familiarly: "I think I'd like to try Cleo this time;" "You know, you'd probably look very good in Jet Set;" "There, doesn't Charlie Girl bring out her eyes beautifully?" The wigs cost between sixty and seventy dollars, Sheina said, and some had to be brought back to the shop about every four months for recombing. The young woman who had just come from France told Sheina that she and her family had found French anti-Semitism particularly hidebound, and had felt their differentness from the people around them much more acutely in Paris than they did in New York, because the French made much more of a fuss about it. French children, she said, were always pointing at her children and laughing. She expressed regret, too, that, for all the elegance of the French Jews, there was no *mikvah* there as up to date as the one that was being built in the Crown Heights community. She said she couldn't wait to use it. Sheina gave me a knowing look, and after we'd left the shop and were walking to the car she said, "You see, I'm not kidding. We *enjoy* the *mikvah*."

"You don't ever feel that it's a burden, or wish that it weren't necessary?" I asked.

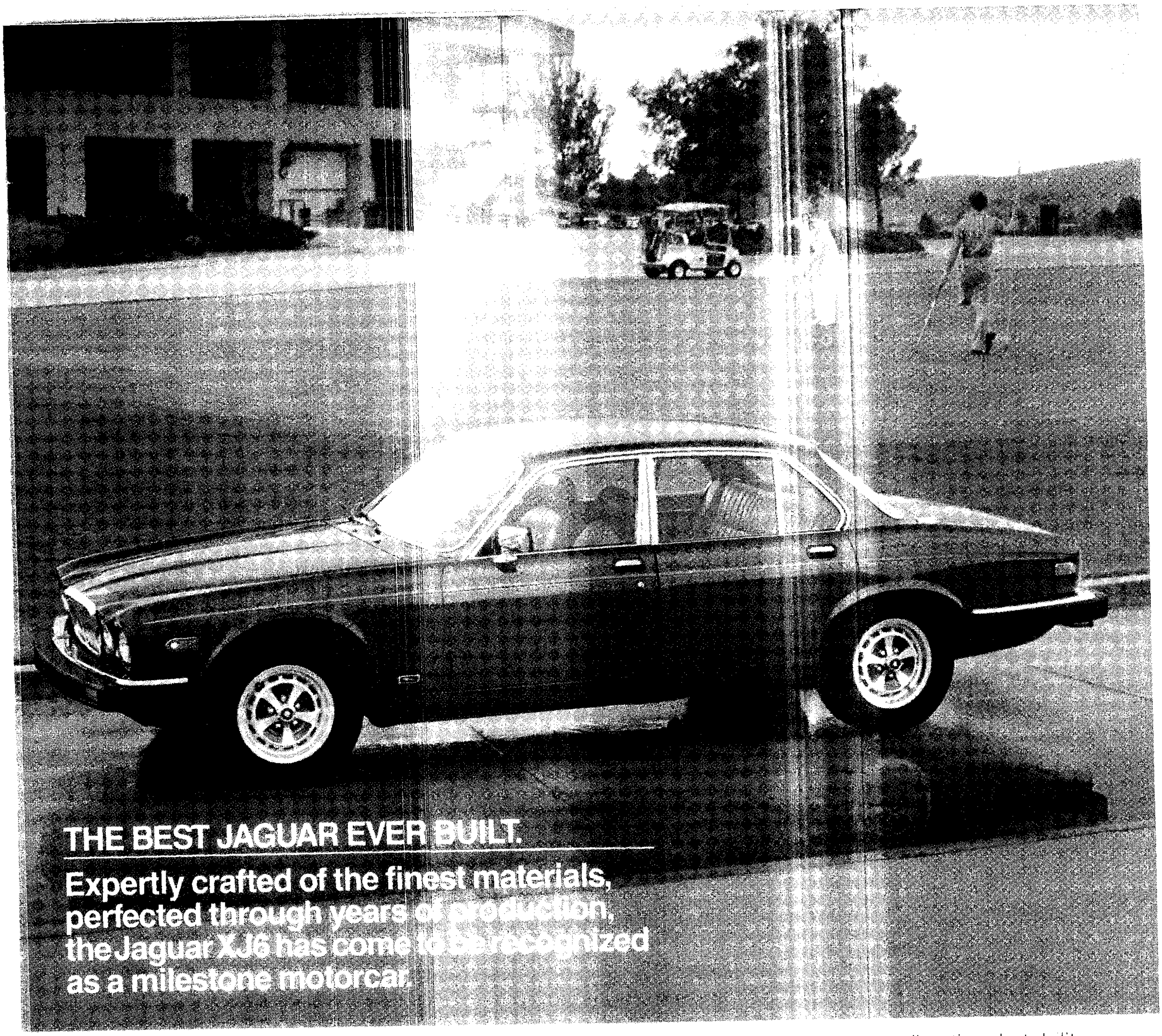
"Absolutely not. I'm renewed and refreshed by it. I feel that it connects me in a mysterious way to the Jews of all time. There were two *mikvahs* found when they dug up Masada, you know—embattled as they were with the Romans, the Jews somehow found time to build two *mikvahs*. But it's a hard experience to describe. Why don't you try it yourself?"

I said that I'd like to, perhaps after the new *mikvah* was finished.

THE central place that the *mikvah* holds in the lives of the Orthodox is sharply illustrated by a story that Aryeh Kaplan recounts in "Waters of Eden," about an American friend of his who paid a secret visit to a religious family he knew in Russia. It is not against the law to practice one's religion in Russia, but it is a fact of life that Jews who openly do so invite the antagonism of the bureaucracy. Just before the American was about to depart, the Russian, whose name was Yaakov, beckoned to him and said, "Wait, I have something that I would like to show you." Looking over his shoulder anxiously, the Russian took Kaplan's friend over to a clothes closet:

> Yaakov opened the closet, moved aside a number of boxes, and carefully lifted up a false floor. Under the floorboards there was a staircase, leading to a small pool. "This is the city's *mikvah*," he proudly announced, "over forty families make use of it." . . . No religious facilities could be built without express government permission. Otherwise it was subject to the direst penalties. Besides, the house was government property, and if caught he would face a long prison sentence for "defacing" it.
>
> Gradually—almost cautiously—he began to tell how the *mikvah* was built. All the work had to be done in the utmost secrecy. No one, even his closest friends and neighbors, could know what he was doing. Only a small amount of digging could be done under the house each day, so that the dirt could be disposed of without arousing suspicion. Small quantities of cement—"for making minor repairs"—were purchased, until there was enough to line the *mikvah*. A similar subterfuge had to be used to obtain pipes for the plumbing. In addition, the rigorous requirements of Jewish Law had to be satisfied. This is difficult enough under any circumstances, even if secrecy is not a paramount consideration.
>
> Not until the *mikvah* was completed did Yaakov dare tell anyone about it. At first, his closest friends shared the secret. Gradually, one by one, other families were invited to make use of the hidden *mikvah*. Most of them did not believe it possible—but they came anyway. Before long, Yaakov's "top-secret project" had become the community *mikvah*.

When Kaplan's friend asked Yaakov why he had exposed himself to so much danger to build the *mikvah*,

**THE BEST JAGUAR EVER BUILT.**

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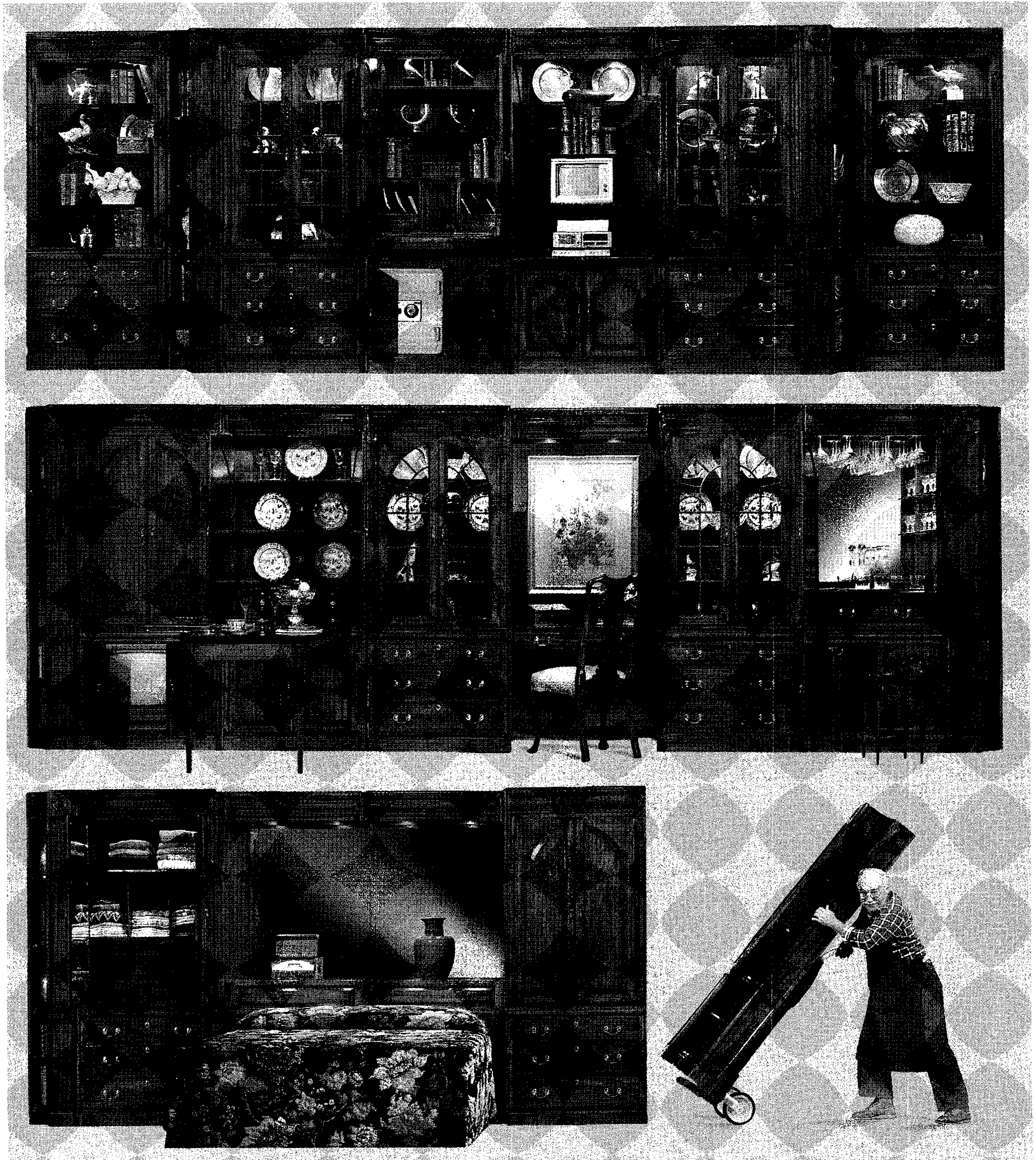

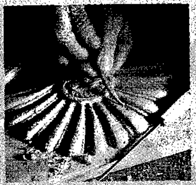

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he answered simply, "Without it, I could not live as a Jew."

But how does a woman's need to "purify" herself before resuming sexual relations with her husband relate to Judaism's concept of the holiness of sex? The argument is that when men and women have sexual congress they may bring down a soul to the world—a new human being. Kaplan points out that, biologically speaking, it would be more efficient if the uterine lining were not repeatedly shed:

> Actually, there is no biological or medical reason why the [uterine] lining must be expelled and restored each month. There is no reason why the ovum has to "die" only to be replaced by another egg. Most biologists look upon this as an unexplained inefficiency in the human reproductive system.
>
> To the primitive mind, which had no idea of the inner workings of the womb, the very idea that a woman should lose a portion of her vital fluids was both bizarre and frightening. They could not explain it logically . . . therefore, they attributed it to some "evil force." According to most anthropologists, this is one of the main reasons so many taboos surround the menstruating woman in primitive cultures. . . . When we look at menstruation in the light of human imperfection in general, it clearly fits the pattern. As a result of Adam's sin, man lost the ability to perfect himself, both spiritually and physically. . . . The clearest manifestation of this physical imperfection is man's mortality. Man wears out and dies.

Women, of course, inherited from Eve "pangs in childbearing" (Genesis 3:16), and, by extension, a reproductive system that was designed to remind them of her fall and expulsion from Eden. Thus, a woman cannot enter into sexual relations, one of the holiest of human activities, until she ritually purifies herself, just as the high priest did before entering the Holy of Holies. To those who stand at some remove from the central myths of the Bible, this explanation may not seem very different from the taboos imposed on women by those "primitive minds" that attributed women's imperfectibility to an "evil force." But to the Hasidim, who believe that the Bible is the revealed word of God, it is a logical one, and one that makes bathing in the *mikvah* a crucial part of their lives.

SOME time after my visit to the new *mikvah* with Sheina, and after the birth of my second child, I return to pay a visit by myself. It is about a forty-five-minute subway ride from lower Manhattan, where I live, to the Kingston Avenue I.R.T. stop. After Park Slope, mine is the only white face in the subway car. It is sundown, the prescribed time for taking a *mikvah*, when I surface, and, as usual, there is a large group of bearded, black-hatted, sombrely dressed men in front of 770, which is just across the street from the subway exit. The neighborhood still seems as dreamlike as it did on my first visit, but the faces above the beards have begun to look more individualized to me; the perceptual trick seems to be to "read" them from the nose up.

As I walk down Union Street toward the *mikvah*, I find myself trailing a black teen-age boy who is bopping along the sidewalk with an enormous radio blasting out reggae music. Formalizing the occasion, I imagine that the music is a kind of fanfare for the ritual I am about to experience for the first time, and that the boy and I form a procession. The farther we get from Kingston Avenue, the more deserted and run-down the street becomes. Across from the tan brickface *mikvah*, which glows faintly in the fading light, is a large, deserted apartment house with broken windows. There are no windows at all in the new *mikvah* building. A fancy brown canvas canopy arches above the entranceway, giving the place the appearance of an elegant salon. I am buzzed in, ascend a flight of stairs, and give eight dollars to a Slavic-looking attendant, who tells me that she can't remember ever seeing me before. Many women both shower and bathe at the *mikvah* in preparation for the ritual immersion. I explain to the attendant that I have already bathed at home, so she leads me to a dressing room with only a shower in it. The shower has a sliding frosted-glass door. There is burgundy-white-and-gold Art Deco paper on the walls, and a bevelled diamond-shaped mirror over a Formica dressing table. There is also a wig stand, a bright-red Clairol Son of a Gun fourteen-hundred-watt hair dryer, a long cream-colored terry-cloth bathrobe, and a pair of multi-colored rubber sandals. The attendant shows me a tan intercom and tells me to pick it up when my preparations are completed, and let the *mikvah* lady know that I am ready.

As I close the door, I notice several women flitting down the corridor. The *mikvah* is considered an extremely private ritual, and there is no socializing here—none of the affectionate banter so prevalent in feminine Hasidic society. Women generally go

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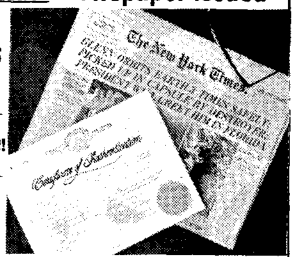
to the *mikvah* alone, and even Sheina, who has always been eager to act as my cicerone on visits to landmarks of Jewish Orthodoxy, did not offer to accompany me to this one. The lower half of the dressing room is covered with gleaming off-white tile. I had always imagined *mikvahs* to be rather Oriental—vaporous, dim places, chaste seraglios. Nothing could be farther from my preconception than this sleek Swiss spa.

The toilette one makes in preparation for the *mikvah* is elaborate. Having read about (and followed) the complicated instructions before I came, I am not surprised to see a small tray holding Q-tips, cotton balls, tissues, shampoo, baby oil, toothpicks, bleach, alcohol, soap, and Adwe New Fluoride Formula Kosher toothpaste. It is considered extremely important that the waters of the *mikvah* touch every part of a woman's body. Any particle of matter, however minute, that prevents this from happening makes the immersion invalid. The kinds of matter that might—literally—gum things up have been spelled out in excruciating detail by rabbinical authorities; for example, "A splinter which protrudes from the skin, or even if it does not protrude from the skin but nevertheless is on the same level with the outer skin, *must* be removed." Even bits of food that get caught in one's teeth are considered impurities, so a box of dental floss is provided. But, then again, the floss might get stuck, so taped to the little plastic box is the typed message "Don't floss if your teeth are tight together." Most of the people who come to the *mikvah* already know everything there is to know about preparing for it. As a precaution, however, a lengthy checklist has been taped to the wall. Among other things, it suggests that "rabbinic advice should be sought for temporary fillings, root-canal work or capping in progress, nits in the hair, stitches, casts . . . unremovable scabs, unusual skin eruptions." It is further suggested that one ask oneself, "Have I cut finger and toe nails and removed dirt in crevices (bleach helps)? Removed all foreign bodies: false teeth, contact lenses, paint and makeup, nail polish, artificial nails, Band-Aids, bobby pins . . . ?" The list goes on, and suffice it to say that no crevice or orifice of the body is neglected. Scrubbing myself in the shower, I remember a woman who, when I told her of my visits to Crown Heights, commented on the "dirtiness" of the Hasidim, and



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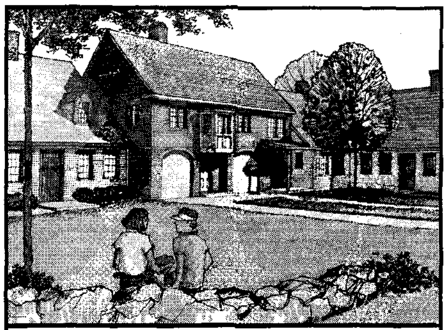

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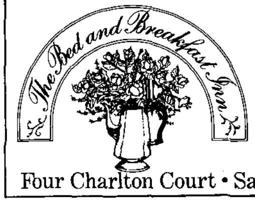
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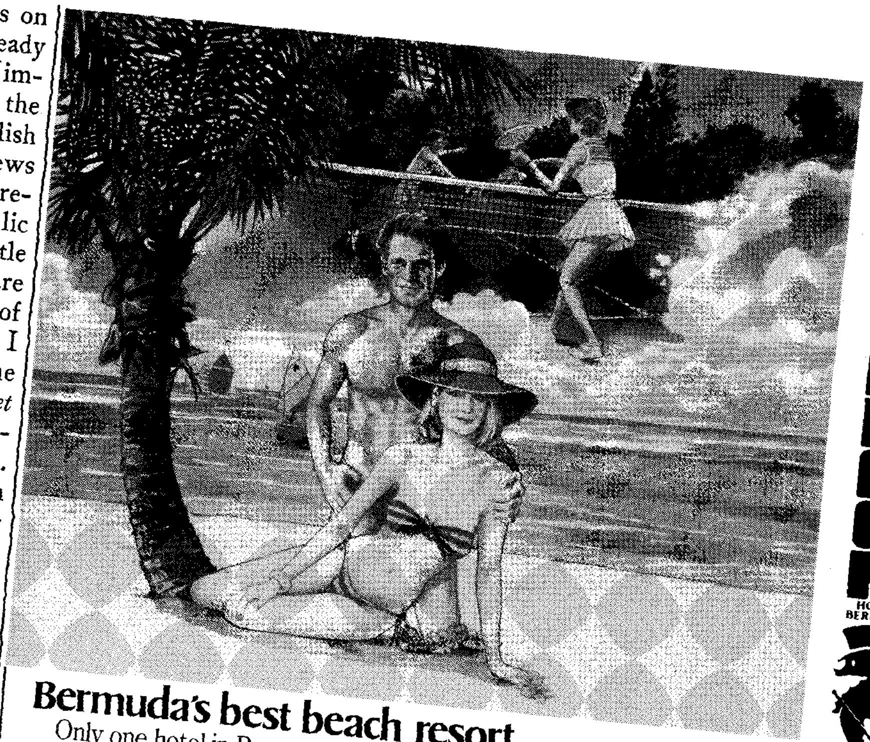
I laugh out loud. The last words on the checklist are "Now you are ready for the great *mitzvah* of *Tevilah* [immersion]." A French version of the list has been taped below the English one (many French-speaking Jews have been visiting the community recently), and, with characteristic Gallic grace, the French version adds a little coda to this: Now, it says, you are ready to perform the great *mitzvah* of *Tevilah* "*avec joie et assurance*." I pick up the intercom and call the *mikvah* matron. I do not feel "*joie et assurance*." I feel nervous. I find myself wishing my mother were here. Then one of the kindest, most benign faces I have ever seen appears smiling at the door, and my worries evaporate. The woman, who is middle-aged and wears a dark wig, tells me as she leads me through the climate-controlled corridor that her name is Brachah. *Brachah*, of course, means "blessing." These Lubavitchers really know how to do things. I tell Brachah, as we enter a small, ivory-tiled, antiseptic-looking room, that I've never taken a *mikvah* before. She folds her hands over her stomach and beams. "Well, then, we'll treat you like a *kallah* [a bride]," she says, and proceeds to explain some of the basics of the ritual to me. Then she asks, enumerating the various items on the checklist, if I've remembered to do all of them. I haven't. I've forgotten to comb my wet hair, and I've forgotten my nose, which I now blow, rather showily. Then, after blotting my eyes with a linen cloth to make sure no mascara lingers on my lashes, Brachah leads me over to the *mikvah*. I take off the robe and stand expectantly in the chest-deep warm green water. Brachah tells me to keep my eyes and lips closed but not too tightly and to keep my feet and arms apart, so that the water will touch my whole body. When I go underwater, I curl naturally into the fetal position. When I come up, Brachah places a linen cloth over my head, and I repeat the *mikvah* blessing after her. Then, the cloth having been removed, I go down two more times. The second time down, I see a little speeded-up movie of all the religious people I know performing this ritual. I think of all the generations of people I haven't known who have considered the impurities of the world dissolvable. My grandmother floats by, curled up, like me, like a little pink shrimp. I see her as she was in her very old age, senile and mute, curled up in the same position on her



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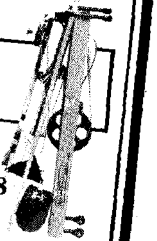

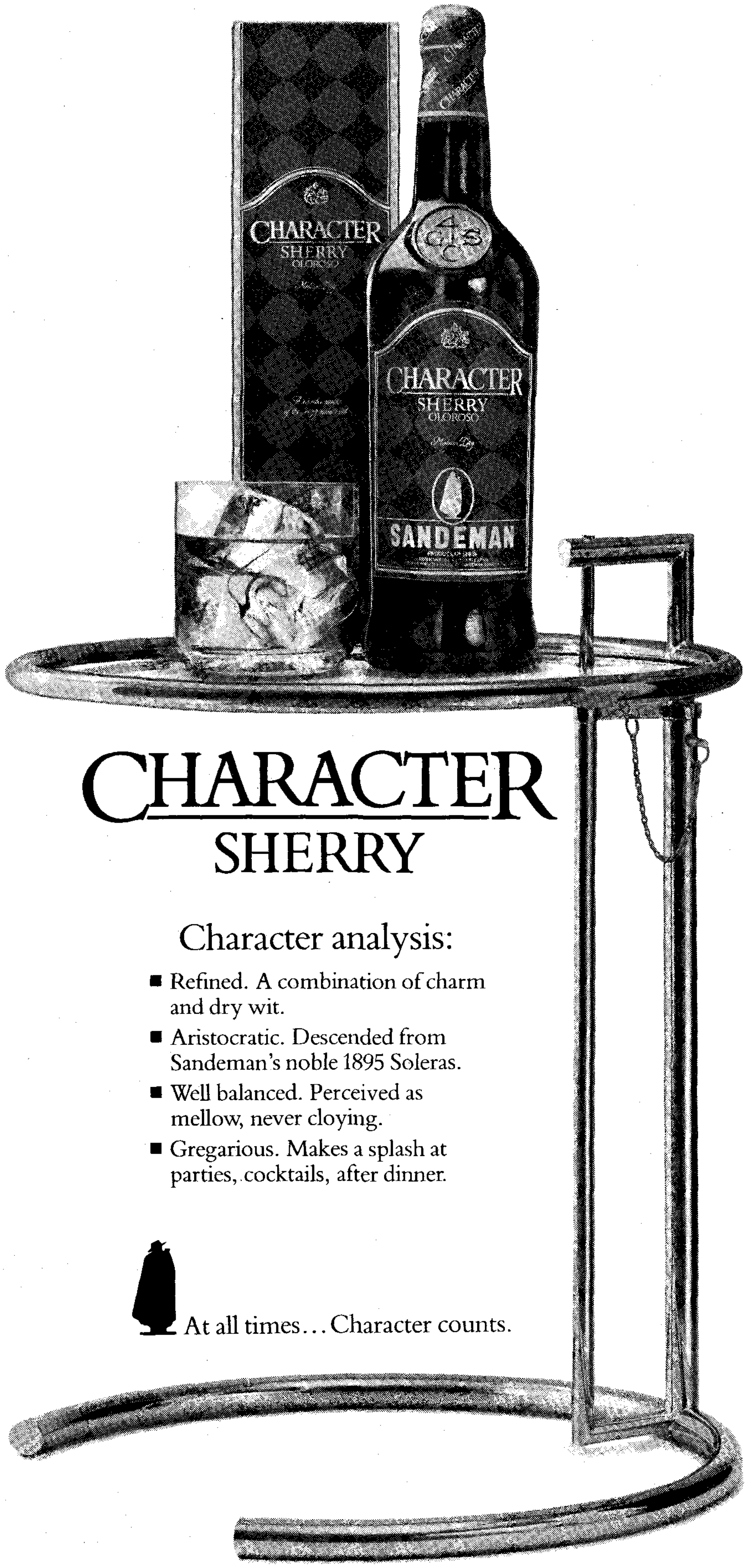

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bed. The third time down, I think of my boys suspended inside me, waiting to join the world. I look up and see Brachah's smiling face through the water. I feel good. As I am climbing out, Brachah tells me that some people prefer to immerse themselves with their bodies in a horizontal position, and asks me if I'd like to try it that way. I try it, but find it less satisfactory. It's too much like going for a swim.

When I finish dressing, I find Brachah and the other attendant huddled together at the reception desk. I've told Brachah that I live in Manhattan and came over by subway. "We don't think you should go home on the subway," Brachah says. "It's really not safe to walk alone out there now." It's only a little after eight, but I take their word for it and call Black Pearl, a local car service. (No city radio cabs will come to Crown Heights. No yellow cabs cruise the neighborhood streets.) Five minutes later, a blue Chevrolet station wagon pulls up. I thank the women for their help, say goodbye, and climb into the car. The driver is a garrulous, handsome Haitian. Loud, monotonous music blasts out of the radio. Hanging from his rearview mirror is an air deodorizer, which fills the car with an overpowering sickly-sweet smell. Competing with the air deodorizer is the sharp scent of his after-shave, which he keeps in a kit on the front seat. At a long red light, he splashes a little extra on. My ablutions have made me feel tender, almost porous, and the harsh smells are overwhelming. Is this how Moshe and Sheina feel when they traffic with the outside world? The driver tells me that his company is often called upon to pick up women at that spot, which he seems to believe is a kind of shrine.

"You're Jewish, right?" he says, shouting to be heard over the music. "You have a lot of rules you have to follow?"

I hesitate. I am not up to any discussion.

"Yes, I'm Jewish," I say, as I roll the window down and point my nose toward the fresh air. —Lis Harris

(*This is the second part of a three-part article.*)

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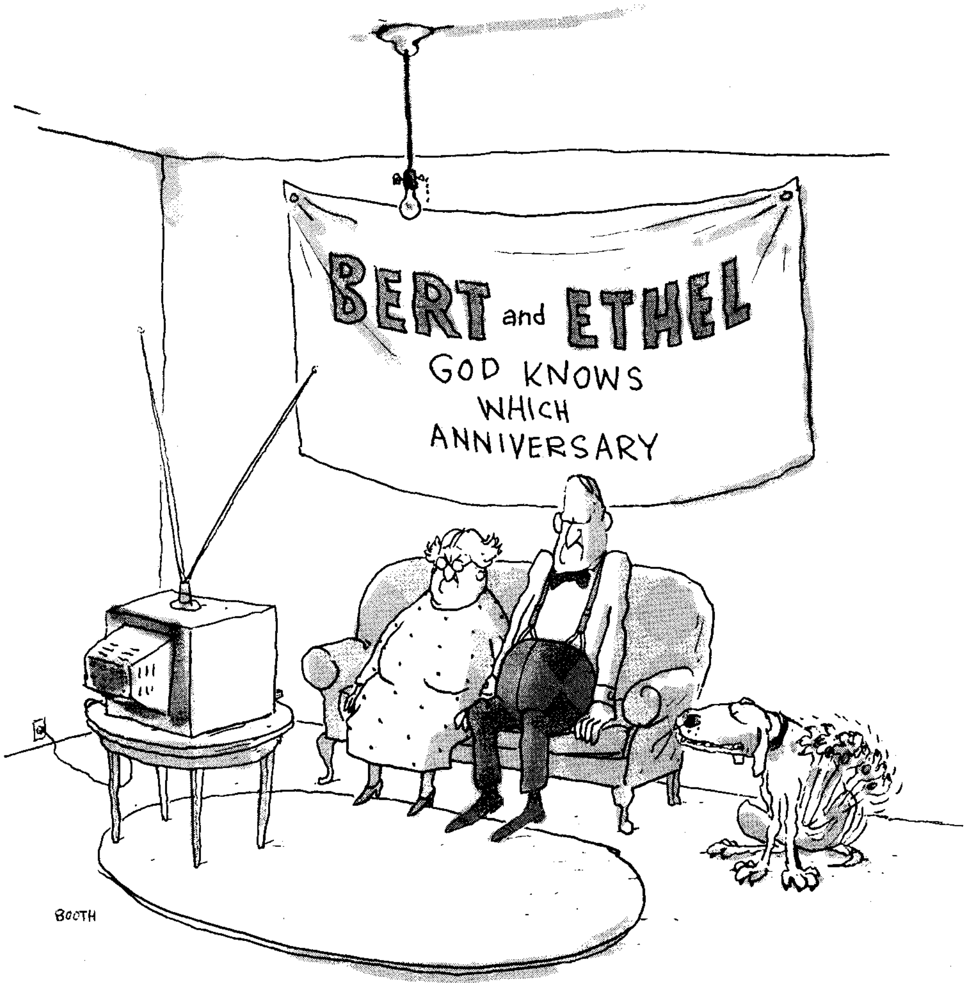
Airhead's Delight

MARTIN SCORSESE directed "After Hours" confidently, with a knowing air, as if he were making a hip and witty movie. His laughter is built right into the film's tone, and in the early scenes I felt eager to laugh along with him. The crack timing of the titles put me in an expectant frame of mind, and it was a relief to see that Scorsese is no longer using the frozen setups of his last picture, "The King of Comedy." His work here is livelier and more companionable than it has been in recent years; the camera scoots around, making jokes—or, at least, near-jokes. But the movie keeps telling you to laugh, even though these near-jokes are about all you get. Soon it becomes clear that the episodes aren't going anywhere—that what you're seeing is a random series of events in a picture that just aspires to be an entertaining trifle and doesn't make it. It sags.

Joseph Minion wrote the script as an assignment when he was a graduate student in the Columbia University Film School, and it's a film student's knickknack, reminiscent of the experimental short films made by avant-gardists in the twenties. The central character is Paul (Griffin Dunne), a young word-processor operator in midtown New York, who goes down to SoHo for a date and finds himself trapped in a nightmare world. He loses his money and his shirt and is buffeted about in a pouring rain, contending with one flaky, threatening woman after another and being betrayed by each person he trusts. It's a paranoid fantasy, but of a skittish variety. The episodes don't have any particular ties to what's going on in Paul's life or his psyche; they're devised strictly to extend the movie. In the opening scene, Paul is instructing an office worker, played by Bronson Pinchot, in the use of a word processor, and while Pinchot speaks of what he'd rather be doing Paul's eyes wander around the vast office. Seizing the opportunity for a little jokey camera movement here, the jittery Scorsese puts us on the wrong track—we're led to think that Paul has other things on his mind. If he does, we never find out what they are. And if all the emotionally hungry bohemian women who surround him—Rosanna Arquette, Linda Fiorentino, Teri Garr, Catherine O'Hara, Verna Bloom—represent anything more than a twenty-six-year-old screenwriter's sexual fears we're not briefed on it. "After Hours" is an external film on an internal subject, and though there are recurrent motifs—keys, burns, death's-head emblems, Paul's lost twenty-dollar bill, allusions to "The Wizard of Oz"—they don't come together. They're just free-floating trimmings.

The small, dark Griffin Dunne is onscreen almost all the time. Anxious and exhausted, he keeps looking in the mirrors of freaky women's bathrooms, brushing his hair back with both hands. Is Paul meant to be the norm, an Everyman bewildered by the treacherous, demanding occupants of this SoHo Oz? I guess so—we see everything through his eyes. But the writer hasn't come up with ways for Paul to discover more about himself and become more inventive; he just rushes around in a panic. So Dunne (who was wryly amusing as the hero's werewolf chum in "An American Werewolf in London") has nothing to work with but whatever charm and ingenuity he can summon up. He becomes repetitive very fast. Whirling about impishly, he may remind you now and then of Dudley Moore, but it's Dudley Moore without his resourcefulness, and without the special quality that's linked to it—the feeling you get that the child is still alive inside the man. As Paul, Dunne makes you think he's got a gopher inside him.

Most of the performers in smaller parts come off much better. As a cocktail waitress with a blond beehive, who does sketches of her sixties idols, Teri Garr has a glittering eccentricity; she plays this kind of role better than anyone else ever has—she makes the waitress's nuthead scariness pretty damn scary. In her apartment, this woman has a top shelf covered with cans of hair spray: she must be hoarding them for the post-nuclear age. (Too bad Scorsese doesn't give the joke a bit of a spin by having Paul spot them.) The tall, low-voiced Linda Fiorentino—a relative newcomer to films—is enjoyable as a lusty sculptor who works in papier-mâché. (Dunne's most convincing scene is the one where his conversation puts her to sleep.) As for Rosanna Arquette, who plays Paul's



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date: at movie after movie I've been waiting for her to reveal more of the zonked sensual mystery she had in the TV film "The Executioner's Song." This picture—in which she plays a girl who keeps switching gears and changing her mind—doesn't offer her much of a chance. Still, she acts like somebody in a high-school play. In the cafeteria scene where she meets Paul, he's reading "Tropic of Cancer" and she introduces herself by reciting a passage in a quaint rush of words. (What is she doing? What does Scorsese think she's doing?) It's no compliment to her to say that she may be perfect for the picture. The standout performance is given by John Heard, who plays a bartender. He fills the role, and then some; he gives the movie its only rooted moments. His scene behind the bar—he answers the phone and is told that the girl he loves has just killed herself—takes the movie to a different plane. When he's onscreen, it's possible to envision what the picture might have been like *if* Heard had played the normal man Paul. Something might have seemed to be at stake. (The slender material might have played best with a young Bob Newhart type—a decent but completely unimaginative fellow, the kind who gets a joke too late.)

"After Hours" has obvious similarities to that other SoHo screwball fantasy, Susan Seidelman's "Desperately Seeking Susan" (which was actually shot several months later). Scorsese's movie isn't in the ditsy sentimental-romantic mode, though; he's too savvy for that. This isn't necessarily an advantage: audiences may get more to respond to from Seidelman's think-pink fairy tale of life among the punks than from Scorsese's cooler, more controlled approach. (And her picture isn't motiveless, like this one.) What's surprising about "After Hours" is that, given the opportunity to show downtown funkiness from the inside, and to show us how the square Paul recoils, Scorsese adopts the square point of view. (The artists are all crackpots.) Scorsese doesn't identify with the downtown existence; he doesn't satirize it with any strong feelings, either. It's nothing he cares about. We don't get any impression of SoHo life in this movie: the streets are bare, the cafeteria is empty, and the subway station Paul goes into is deserted. The picture was shot on city locations, and Scorsese catches architectural details and the thickly layered paint on a fire escape, but it's a vacant-

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looking city, with everything primed for the camera.

Since there's nothing in the script to express, the cinematography, by the gifted Michael Ballhaus, isn't expressive. It's elegant, crisp, and flashy. Scorsese has made a classroom exercise, with perky zooms and cute little dissolves. The scene of Linda Fiorentino tossing her keys down to Paul, so he can enter her building, is shot so that we get the visual sensation of the keys coming right smack at our faces—the sensation Paul gets. It's almost like 3-D, and it's certainly a speedball effect. Its only purpose is to give us a little visual zinger in a movie where, after a while, that's all we can hope for.

Produced independently by Dunne, Amy Robinson, and Robert F. Colesberry, with a bank loan arranged on the basis of a pickup and release by the Geffen Company and Warner Brothers, "After Hours" is a low-budget film (about four million dollars), but it's as airheaded as the current Hollywood package jobs, and almost as impersonal. Some of Scorsese's camera tricks and teases are like a master professor's gags, and there are also his recognizable characteristics: his short attention span, and the way he gets a sudden fix on something and the camera bears down on it but you don't know why and neither does the character who's doing the looking. Scorsese slips in a few self-referential bits: at one point, Rosanna Arquette says something that sounds like a reprise of a line Sandra Bernhard delivered in "The King of Comedy;" and the director who had the sociopath of "Taxi Driver" wearing a Mohawk haircut for a ritual killing now has Paul trying to keep his head from being shaved when he goes into a club on Mohawk Night. (It's such a mild joke it verges on self-parody.) Scorsese slips himself in, too: he's in the club, whipping around a big spotlight. But he's using his skills (and even his personality) like a hired hand, making a vacuous, polished piece of consumer goods—all surface. This flyspeck of a movie represents a new kind of precious, craftsmanlike emptiness. It's a technique-conscious movie that may seem sparkling and wondrous to technique-crazy moviegoers. —PAULINE KAEL

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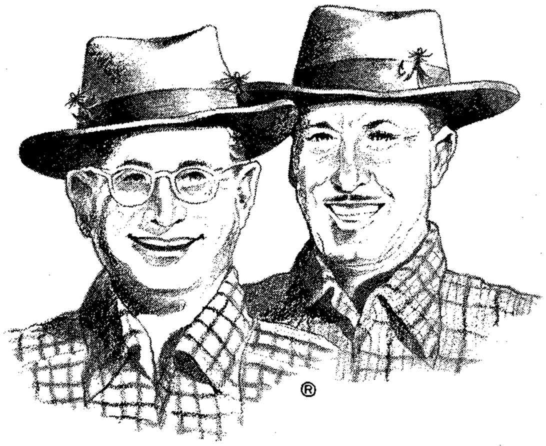

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MUSICAL EVENTS

Franco-Caledonian

THE main theme of this year's Edinburgh Festival was the Auld Alliance, between Scotland and France, and French art was prominent in the programs. The principal operas were Marc-Antoine Charpentier's "Actéon," Rameau's "Anacréon," Chabrier's "L'Étoile," and Debussy's "Pelléas et Mélisande." "Anacréon" (1757) and "Actéon" (about 1685) were played on a double bill, without an intermission: at the close of the first opera, Anacréon invited his guests to enjoy a divertissement, "Actéon," prepared for their entertainment, and on we went. The performers were Les Arts Florissants, the Paris-based ensemble, directed by an American, William Christie, that has taken the lead in the revival of French Baroque music. It is named after a Charpentier opera it has recorded; its big hit is a recording of Charpentier's opera "Médée," and it has also recorded "Anacréon" and "Actéon" (all of them on Harmonia Mundi). Records and concerts have made the ensemble famous, but it also gives fully staged performances. The Rameau-Charpentier bill, which opened in Edinburgh, is booked for an extensive European tour, beginning in the theatre at Versailles, and next year it comes to America.

In Charpentier's day, French music was dominated by Lully, who tolerated no rivals, and until recently Charpentier was known by little more than his tuneful, carol-based Messe de Minuit, which has often been recorded. "Médée"—three acts of it were broadcast by the BBC in 1953, with Patricia Neway, Joan Cross, and Richard Lewis in the principal roles, and the following year a disc of excerpts, conducted by Nadia Boulanger, appeared—revealed a composer of greater range. He seemed more passionate and more profound than Lully. But only in the last decade—and largely as a result of Les Arts Florissants's ardent advocacy—has Charpentier, the Italian-trained Frenchman, emerged fully from the shadow of Lully, the Italian who became, in effect, arbiter of music under Louis XIV. In the first edition of Grove, 1878-90, Lully warrants a two-page entry and Charpentier no entry at all; in the New Grove, Lully gets fifteen pages, and Charpentier follows close, with thirteen and a half.

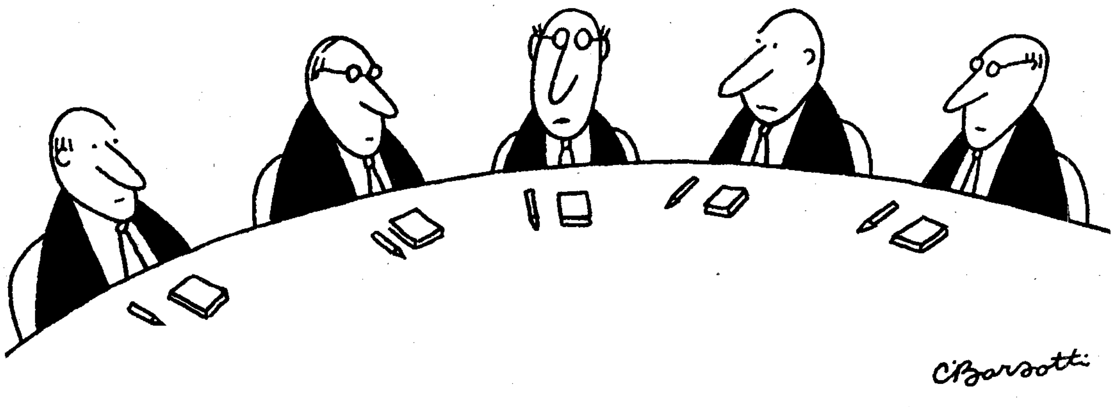
French theatre music of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries can offer two distinct kinds of satisfaction to the modern listener. One is dramatic: the regular operatic excitement of being caught up in characters' plights and being moved by what they feel. Some episodes in Lully's operas and whole acts of Rameau's noble tragédies provide it. The other is more specifically musical: a keen delight in grace, proportion, and felicities of melody, timbre, and harmony. Rameau's music unfailingly provides it. Although several of his stage pieces have but threads of plot—and little action that by conventional canons could be called dramatic—they prove captivating, and even mysteriously stirring, in the theatre. "Anacréon"—the 1757 score, an act added to a revival of "Les Surprises de l'Amour," was his second handling of the subject—is such a work. It is little more than a declaration, in a convivial setting, that wine and love are not incompatible pleasures and that advancing age should not hinder indulgence in the latter. Cupid and a Priestess of Bacchus turn up at Anacréon's party, which ends with the choral affirmation

> Tout s'unit pour nous enflammer.
> Bacchus ne défend pas d'aimer,
> Et l'Amour nous permet de boire!

The metrical alertness with which the civilized discourse is set, the variety of paces, rhythms, and textures, and many sudden, wonderfully beautiful phrases hold the attention securely. "Actéon" has similar virtues and more drama, for it is like a miniature tragédie lyrique. The hero's hushed "sleep" aria and, above all, his recitative and plainte as he is transformed into a stag are episodes of high inspiration.

The performances were given in an intimate, attractive theatre, the Royal Lyceum. The staging, by Pierre Barrat, seemed underrehearsed and will no doubt become more polished; it was on the right lines. The dances that play so large a part in early French opera are always a difficulty. François Raffinot's choreography could be described as tactful, but the dancers—men and women of the Ris et Danceries troupe uniformly dressed in loose off-one-shoulder tunics and with long, lank golden wigs, bare, dirty feet, and impassive modern faces—belonged to a different world from the Louis XV one evoked by the singers. Mr. Christie's band of period instruments, twenty strong, and his company of sixteen singers—who had steady, forward voices and were adept at telling declamation—balanced well. The Actaeon, Dominique Visse, an haute-contre with an eloquent, ductile timbre and a lively stage presence, was the star of the evening.

At an afternoon concert, Les Arts Florissants revealed yet more of Charpentier's achievement, in the long, highly dramatic motet "St. Peter's Denial." The sopranos Agnès Mellon and Jill Feldman (who had been the Diana of "Actéon" and the Priestess of "Anacréon") vied in moving the audience to ecstasy by their passionate yet disciplined utterance of amorous plaintes by Michel Lambert, Lully's father-in-law. Music like this, which may look plain on the page, becomes powerfully affecting when brought to life by such interpreters. Sacred



"Then, gentlemen, it is the consensus of this meeting that we say nothing, do nothing, and hope it all blows over before our next meeting."

works by Guillaume Bouzignac and Étienne Moulinié were also vivid.

"L'ÉTOILE" and "Pelléas" were performed in the pleasing little King's Theatre by the Lyons Opera, whose musical director is the Englishman John Eliot Gardiner. The company has in recent years been acclaimed for its adventurous repertory (it does Charpentier's "Médée," and next season is to do Jean-Marie Leclair's "Scylla et Glaucus," commonly held to be the finest of French eighteenth-century operas after Rameau's); for its brilliant international young orchestra, the average age twenty-five; and for its general liveliness. "L'Étoile" is a captivating light opera, very well composed. It's easy to hear why Chabrier has been revered by French musicians (Ravel said that his "Roi Malgré Lui" changed the whole direction of French harmony), hard to understand why "L'Étoile" was so long neglected, and tempting to predict that the sparkling Lyons production—which has also been seen at the Opéra-Comique, and has been recorded on EMI—may lead to its becoming a repertory piece. The libretto, which includes lyrics by Verlaine, is frothy. The performance, staged by Louis Erlo and conducted by Mr. Gardiner, was witty and elegant. Colette Alliot-Lugaz, in the travesti role of Lazuli, won every heart.

"Pelléas" was an odd production, staged by Pierre Strosser in a single set of black curtains and a row of tall French windows. A program note suggested that "the central drama of a withdrawn girl marrying a troubled man much older than herself and then becoming involved with his boyish half-brother" has no need of the Symbolist imagery in which Maeterlinck clad it: "a realm deep in the mists of chivalric myth, a fairy land forlorn where the casements of the royal castle open on to perilous seas, sunless forests, sinister grottos, uprearing towers, deserted wells." Maybe so: but when a creator employs poetic metaphors his work is seldom improved by having its plain sense recast in prose. (Today, the "Ring" often suffers a similar reduction.) The effect was rather as if the members of a houseparty had decided to go into a big empty room and perform "Pelléas," without costumes or scenery. There were also suggestions that the drama unrolled in Golaud's mind and that what troubled him was more-than-fraternal feelings about Pelléas which two marriages had not quelled. During the scene of his first, forest meeting with Mélisande, he sat in a chair, a broken old man remembering the past, and her voice came from offstage; the butler who led him to bed later played the Shepherd. Pelléas killed himself by running onto Golaud's knife, and died in his brother's passionate embrace while Golaud stroked the boy's long curly hair. (Mélisande had a short Eton crop.) In the final scene, Mélisande did not die but rose from her chair and walked out into the garden, watched by the others. There was no newborn *petite;* it had been thrown out along with the tower, the tresses, and the rest.

In its perverse way, the production was fascinating. The mismatching of text and action produced its own new crop of veiled, ambiguous half statements. The performance was subtly and precisely executed, and musically it was on a very high level. Mr. Gardiner had returned to Debussy's first score, whose thin, fine orchestration was in many places thickened and made less strange when the composer revised it. The orchestra was seated as Debussy suggested:

> The strings make not a barrier in front of, but a circle *around,* the other instruments. Scatter the woodwinds: mix the bassoons with the cellos, the clarinets and oboes with the violins, so that their intervention is something other than a "mayday" distress call [*la chute d'un paquet*].

And the expanded orchestral interludes, which Debussy added to cover slow sceneshifting at the first production, were omitted. The effect was delicate but strong. The music lived along every line, in pure colors. (Debussy said he strove for Mozartian purity, as opposed to Wagnerian richness.) The singers—Diana Montague the Mélisande, François Le Roux the Pelléas, José van Dam the Golaud—had an exquisite command of word and tone. French well sung is the most beautiful of all musical languages.

The orchestra also gave two Usher Hall concerts, one of Mozart, one of Schumann's "Paradise and the Peri," which Schumann called "an oratorio—but one for bright, happy people, not for the oratory." He also declared it to be "my greatest work and perhaps my best." It's not that, but it contains much attractive music and forms ideal festival fare. To enter Paradise, the Peri must bring to its gate "the gift dearest to Heaven." She arrives with the last drop of an Indian patriot's blood, and then with the last sigh of a

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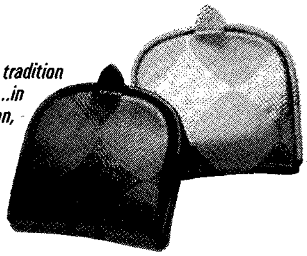

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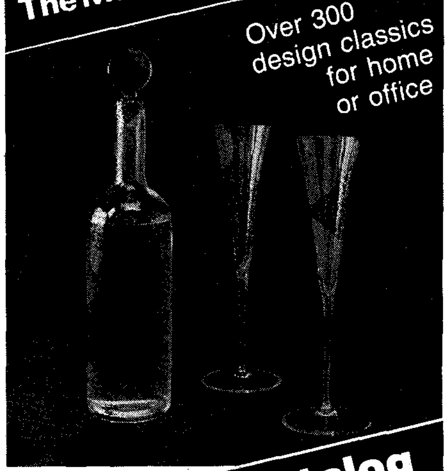

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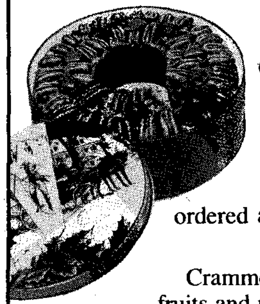

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girl who chose to die beside her lover in plague-stricken Egypt, but neither is found adequate. When she arrives from Syria with the tear of a repentant sinner, her entrance is assured. The exotic subject inspired picturesque scoring. Nile spirits, for example, sing over a rippling cello line touched with triangle, pizzicato strings, and woodwind chords, and when the Peri adds the broad, yearning phrase "Ach Eden, ach Eden" a soft trumpet call accompanies her aspiration. It's an uneven piece, however. The finale, the Peri's jubilant "Freud', ew'ge Freude, mein Werk ist gethan," punctuated by a choral welcome, is square. When the oratorio was introduced to London, in 1856, with Jenny Lind in the title role, the *Times* critic was unappreciative. Schumann, he said, "began nobly, as a critic and general writer upon music . . . But, unhappily, he began to *compose himself.*" Her Majesty "magnanimously remained until the termination of the *cantata*," even though "a less 'dainty dish' was assuredly never 'set before the Queen.' " Mr. Gardiner's players were excellently dainty in episodes that called for them to be so. The fine Edinburgh Festival Chorus was impressive. But most of the soloists, who were mainly American—Pamela Coburn the Peri, Brenda Boozer the angel doorkeeper, Neil Rosenshein the narrator, Thomas Hampson the baritone who describes Syria's beauty—lacked legato. Only Catherine Dubosc, as the Egyptian maiden, joined notes into lines.

THE festival brought excellent new compositions by Peter Maxwell Davies and Alexander Goehr. Davies' "The Peat Cutters" is a twenty-minute cantata written for the National Youth Brass Band of Scotland and the Scottish National Orchestra Junior Chorus and Youth Chorus. The composer, in a program note, called it "a record of and reflection upon a disastrous hill fire last year on Hoy" (the Orkney island on which he lives). The imagery is vivid: as fire sweeps up a hill, it is as if the sun had descended to become incarnate there, while the earth-hugging heather now aspires skyward in swirls of spark and smoke. Eagles soar aloft in the heat haze, deserting their young; the hare darts from the fire like a living brand. Text (the composer's own) and music have a larger resonance: catastrophe has been sparked by man's carelessness; the natural order is reversed, and an Eden becomes an inferno. The work

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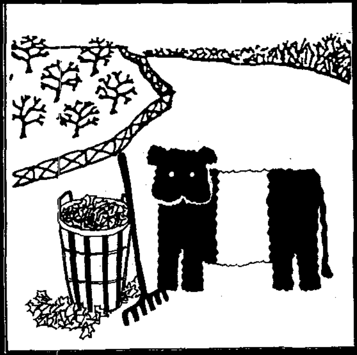

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opens in a sun-drenched stillness and closes in a charred stillness within which new life has just begun to stir. Between comes the fierce, sudden pageant of violence, swift destruction, and horror. The music is wide-ranging, growing from the quiet start through audible transformations, distortions, and destruction. The large forces—eighty players, two hundred singers—are used in sonorities now broad, now furious, often delicate. The young choristers sang with cleanly focussed pitch, and sang their rhythmically difficult music without scores. The young instrumentalists played like virtuosi. Geoffrey Brand conducted.

Goehr's ". . . a musical offering (J.S.B. 1985)," written for the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, is, in its composer's words, "a kind of meditation on the expressive character of polyphonic techniques." There are three movements: Prelude, Ancient Dance Steps, and Ricercar. It's a "learned" composition—in a program note Goehr talked of proportions based on numerical translations of Bach's initials—but with a learning not at all crabbed. Rather, there's a sense of delight in ingenious, smiling, or poignant juxtapositions, metamorphoses, and concinnities. The piece, which lasts about seventeen minutes, is colorful, scored for four contrasting groups: flute with a quintet of upper strings; brass trio; two clarinets and percussion; piano and double-bass. It flows. In the middle movement it dances to the rhythms of Bach's keyboard suites. Through it all there runs, often audibly, a plainchant Alleluia that is sung at the start, in canon, by horn and trombone. It was played at a sunlit morning concert in the Queen's Hall, once a church and now the Scottish Chamber Orchestra's home. Oliver Knussen conducted. There were shapely, joyful performances of Bach's Fourth Brandenburg and Handel's Grand Concerto, Opus 6, No. 5. The concert ended with Goehr's gentle, carefully wrought, moving Sinfonia, written in Jerusalem in 1980.

—ANDREW PORTER

●

MOST FASCINATING NEWS STORY OF THE WEEK

[*The following item, reprinted in its entirety, is from the News*]

ANACONDA, Mont. (AP)—A woman preparing dinner opened a package of broccoli that had been in her freezer for four months and discovered it was a bomb, Police Chief Jim Connors said yesterday.

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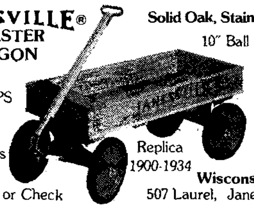

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Echo Soundings, Searches, Probes

Station Island, also known as St. Patrick's Purgatory, is an island in Lough Derg, in northwest Ireland. It has been a site of pilgrimage for centuries; tradition says that St. Patrick once fasted and prayed there. The island gives its name to Seamus Heaney's purgatorial new collection, containing five years' work—"Station Island" (Farrar, Straus; $11.95). The book reflects the disquiet of an uprooted life—one of successive dislocations. Heaney's life began in Castledawson, in Northern Ireland; he was educated at St. Columb's College, in Derry, and then at Queen's University, Belfast (where he later taught); he moved in 1972 to the Republic of Ireland, first to Wicklow and later to Dublin, free-lancing and teaching. A stint of teaching at Berkeley, from 1970 to 1971, began his acquaintance with the United States; now he is the Boylston Professor of Rhetoric and Oratory at Harvard, and divides his time between Cambridge and Dublin. Though these dislocations and uprootings have been voluntary, they could not be without effect, and the title poem of the new volume reviews, in a series of memorial encounters, the "stations" of Heaney's life—especially that of his adolescence, hitherto scanted in his work. The poet moves amid a cloud of ghosts, familial, sexual, and professional. Some are admonitory, some reproachful, some encouraging. These spirits appear and disappear after the manner of Dante's purgatorial shades, as the fiction of the poem brings Heaney as one penitent among a crowd of pilgrims to Station Island, where he stays for the obligatory three-day ritual—fasting, sleeping in a dormitory, attending services at the basilica, walking barefoot round the circular stone "beds," or foundations of ruined monastic beehive cells. The difference between Heaney and the other penitents is that he is no longer a believer. One of the shades, a young priest, accuses him:

"What are you doing here?
. . . All this you were clear of you walked into
over again. And the god has, as they say, withdrawn.
What are you doing, going through these motions?
Unless . . . Unless . . ." Again he was short of breath
and his whole fevered body yellowed and shook.
"Unless you are here taking the last look."

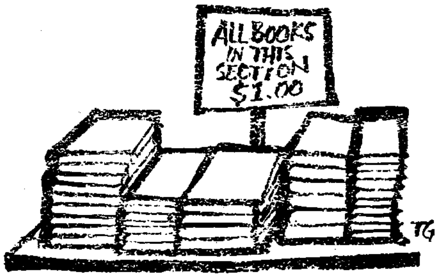
"The last look"—traditionally taken before dying—is not quite what Heaney is up to in this sequence, but he certainly uses the twelve "cantos" of the poem to look back at many of his dead: Simon Sweeney, an old "Sabbath-breaker" from Heaney's childhood; the Irish writer William Carleton (1794-1869), who after he became a Protestant wrote "The Lough Derg Pilgrim," satirizing Catholic superstition; the twentieth-century poet Patrick Kavanagh, who also wrote a poem about the Lough Derg pilgrimage; an invalid relative who died young; the young priest, dead after a few years in the foreign missions; two schoolmasters; the little girl Heaney first felt love for; a college friend shot in his shop by terrorists; an archeologist friend who died young; a cousin murdered by Protestants; an executed Catholic terrorist; a monk who prescribed as penance a translation from John of the Cross; James Joyce. All these characters (with the exception of the invalid young relative) speak to Heaney, and the poem offers a polyphony of admonitions, ranging from the trite ("When you're on the road/give lifts to people, you'll always learn something") to the eloquent—Joyce's advice to the hesitant poet:

"That subject people stuff is a cod's game,
infantile, like your peasant pilgrimage.

You lose more of yourself than you redeem
doing the decent thing. Keep at a tangent.
When they make the circle wide, it's time to swim

out on your own and fill the element
with signatures on your own frequency,
echo soundings, searches, probes, allurements,
elver-gleams in the dark of the whole sea."

More striking than the attributed voices is Heaney's own self-portrait, full of a Chaucerian irony overpainted with Dantesque earnestness. In "Station Island," Heaney is sometimes (as with Joyce) the abashed apprentice, sometimes (as with his murdered cousin) the guilty survivor, sometimes the penitent turning on himself with hallucinatory self-laceration:



All seemed to run to waste
As down a swirl of mucky, glittering flood
Strange polyp floated like a huge corrupt
Magnolia bloom, surreal as a shed breast,
My softly awash and blanching self-disgust.

Though the narrative armature of "Station Island" is almost staidly conventional—borrowed from Dante, even down to his traditional words for the appearance and fading of ghosts—the writing often moves out, as in the passage I have just quoted, to the limits of description. Heaney has always had extraordinary descriptive powers—dangerous ones; conscious of the rich, lulling seductions of his early verse, he experiments here in resourceful and daring ways with both the maximizing and the minimizing of description. The dream passage about the corrupt polyp interrupts lushness with the surgical slash of the shed breast; the same typical self-correction can be seen in a passage where William Carleton plays the surgical role, interrupting the dreamy language of the poet:

"The alders in the hedge," I said, "mushrooms,
dark-clumped grass where cows or horses dunged,
the cluck when pith-lined chestnut shells split open

in your hand, the melt of shells corrupting,
old jampots in a drain clogged up with mud—"
But now Carleton was interrupting:

"All this is like a trout kept in a spring
or maggots sown in wounds—
another life that cleans our element.

We are earthworms of the earth, and all that
has gone through us is what will be our trace."
He turned on his heel when he was saying this

and headed up the road at the same hard pace.

This small sample will do to show why Heaney's lines are not corrupted by pure linguistic revel—as Dylan Thomas's often were, their simpler

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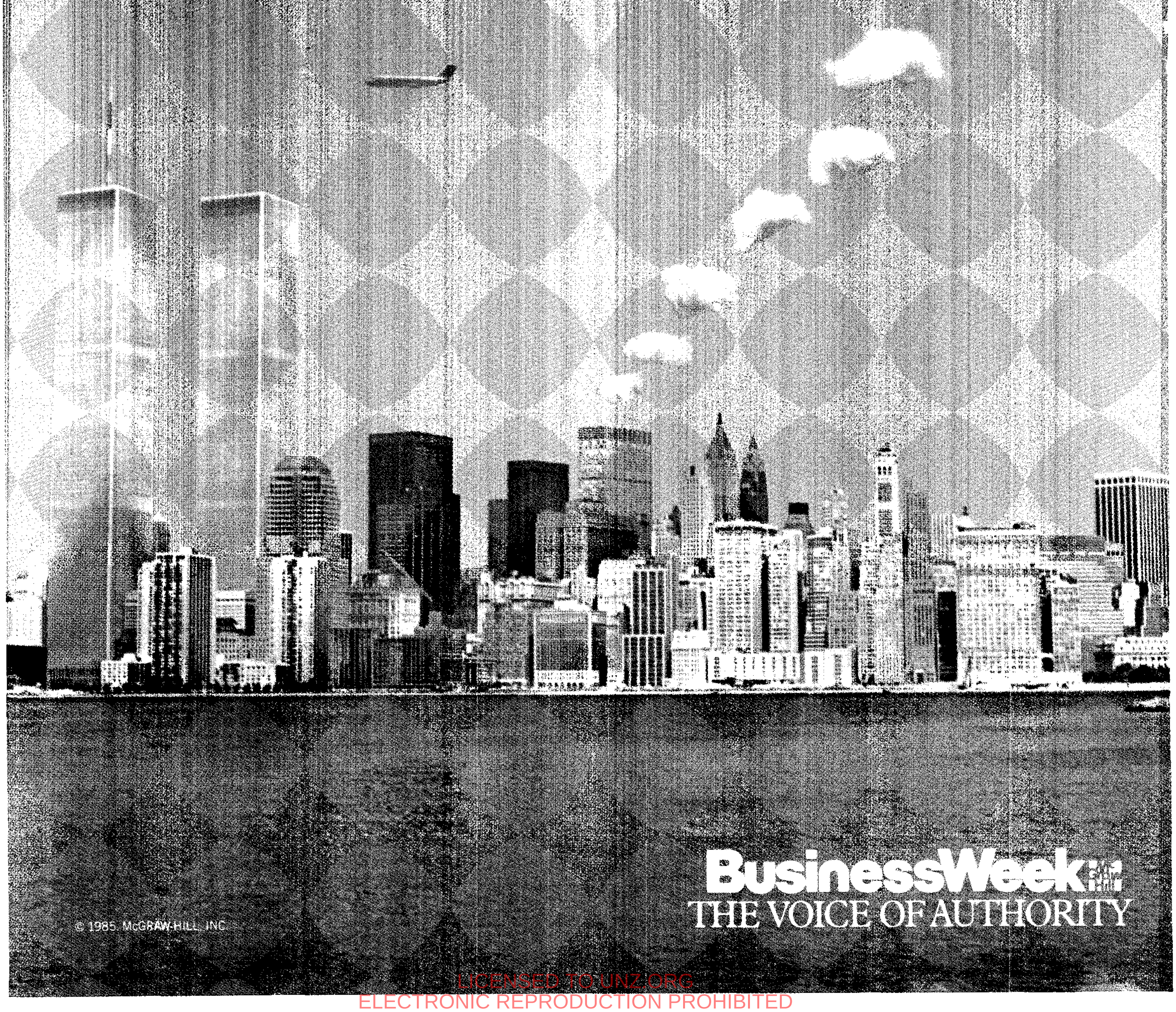

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phonetic indulgence unchecked by astringency. Heaney works, in Yeats' phrase, to "articulate sweet sounds together" in ways not cloying to the ear, often restraining his delight in the unforeseen coincidences of language, sometimes allowing the delight to break loose. Under the influence of Lowell, Heaney pruned his young luxuriance severely in some of the poems of "Field Work" (1979). The rapturous lyricism of the early poetry, though never lost, adapted itself to a worldlier tone, released in "Station Island" into mordant vignettes of Irish social life. Here Heaney describes the ordination of the young priest and his visits back to the parish from the missions:

Blurred oval prints of newly ordained faces,
"Father" pronounced with a fawning relish,
the sunlit tears of parents being blessed.

I met a young priest, glossy as a blackbird
. . . his polished shoes
unexpectedly secular beneath
a pleated, lace-hemmed alb of linen cloth. . . .

"I'm older now than you when you went away,"

I ventured, feeling a strange reversal.
"I never could see you on the foreign missions.
I could only see you on a bicycle,

a clerical student home for the summer
doomed to the decent thing. Visiting neighbours.
Drinking tea and praising home-made bread.

Something in them would be ratified
when they saw you at the door in your black suit,
arriving like some sort of holy mascot."

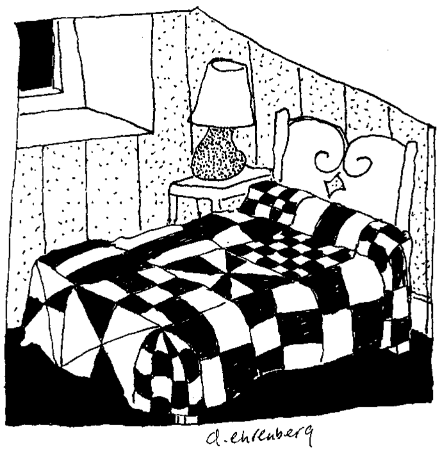
The village round sketched here would be familiar to anyone raised in Ireland. Heaney's satiric phrases—"fawning relish," "holy mascot"—defamiliarize the pieties; the sharpness of his eye is matched in such places by sharpness of tongue. A brave exactness in saying the socially unsayable appears in Heaney's epigrammatic summation of the society of his youth. Though the nostalgia for his "first kingdom"—so evident in his earliest poems—is still present, he has added an adult judgment on the deficiencies of its people:

They were two-faced and accommodating.
And seed, breed and generation still
they are holding on, every bit
as pious and exacting and demeaned.

The five adjectives and the four nouns in this passage hold on to their places in the lines as if they were sentinels guarding a fort. They cannot be budged (as anyone can discover by trying to put "two-faced" in the place of "demeaned," or "generation" in the place of "seed"). The words act out the tenaciousness of the Catholics of Northern Ireland, surviving in spite of being—necessarily—"two-faced and accommodating." When words fit together in this embedded way, they make a harsh poetry far from the softer verse of Heaney's youth. It is a poetry aiming not at liquidity but at the solidity of the mason's courses.

At the same time, Heaney's native tendernesses, beautifully realized, ornament his pages. In a typical passage, Heaney as a boy sits in a beech tree, where "the very ivy/puzzled its milk-tooth frills and tapers/over the grain." In this short spill of words, there are no obvious beauties of alliteration, assonance, rhyming; instead, there is the pure discovery of language adequate to the combination of ivy and bole. What is the right verb for the way ivy moves over a tree trunk? What is the right word for baby ivy leaves? What are the words for their shape and edges? "Its milk-tooth frills and tapers" becomes the reflexive object of the oddly transitive verb "puzzled" as the ivy instinctively plots out its new route and puts out its young delicate sprays and tendrils at the same time. A poet can find such words only by analogy with his own inner life; he feels what it is like when consciousness or perception leafs itself out along a new puzzling path. When he needs a word for the ivy, it comes from his own kinesthetic awareness of the body. Everywhere, Heaney's inner life gives life to outer life, attaching to it the felt inner coursings of physical and mental existence.

In one *ars poetica*, "The King of the Ditchbacks," Heaney describes this uncertain and tentative effort of the poet to track down his inner stirrings and translate them into words that are at the same time adequate for his perception of the external world. The poet, says Heaney, feels his ghostly other—his phenomenological self, one might say—making a track, an unintelligible code, "a dark morse along the bank;" the poet follows:



If I stop
he stops
like the moon.

He lives in his feet
and ears, weather-eyed,
all pad and listening,
a denless mover.

A prose poem continues the relationship:

He was depending on me as I hung out on the limb of a translated phrase like a youngster dared out on to an alder branch over the whirlpool. . . . I remembered I had been vested for this calling.

Like a priest being ordained, Heaney is vested for the calling of poet in a mysteriously beautiful poem that attempts to exemplify the paradoxical total naturalness and total social estrangement of the office of the poet. He recounts the day of his "sense of election," when he was camouflaged and taken bird hunting:

When I was taken aside that day
I had the sense of election:

they dressed my head in a fishnet
and plaited leafy twigs through meshes

so my vision was a bird's
at the heart of a thicket

and I spoke as I moved
like a voice from a shaking bush.

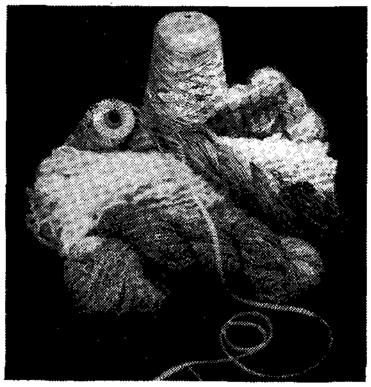
That day, the hunters catch no birds, but Heaney is urged to return in the fall, "when the gundogs can hardly retrieve/what's brought down." The poet realizes he will return, but not to hunt; rather, he will return in spirit, as a watcher, a disguised Keatsian icon of the harvest:

And I saw myself
rising to move in that dissimulation,

top-knotted, masked in sheaves, noting
the fall of birds: a rich young man

leaving everything he had
for a migrant solitude.

The echo of the Gospel confirms the



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depth of the election. The elegiac richness of the language argues the aristocracy of the poet's calling, but the memory of the stealthy self, "a denless mover" living in his senses, argues also for the intimacy of this aristocracy with the biological origins of all social forms.

The allusion to the Gospel recurs in the last poem of "Station Island"—"On the Road"—where Heaney recalls "that track through corn/where the rich young man/asked his question—/*Master, what must I/do to be saved*?" In raising this ultimate question, Heaney asks what all the self-born must ask: If the gods of the parental hearth, the altars of the local church, the teachers of the native schools do not suffice as guardians and mentors, then where is one to turn? This is the central outcry of Heaney's book, and it leads him first into the affronting encounters with family, school, and church which fill the long title poem. But after that it ushers him into a strange and unpopulated realm, which one can only call the space of writing. The refusal of the social plenum leaves the artist empty, but his kingdom becomes the entire scope of consciousness. The significant word "empty" recurs several times in this volume, notably in "On the Road":

> In my hands
> like a wrested trophy,
> the empty round
> of the steering wheel.

The end of the intellectual, emotional, and aesthetic struggle to discard false gods seems to be a far-stretching emptiness, but it is one in which the steering wheel is in one's own hands, a prize of victory.

"On the Road," seeking a solution to its sense of bewilderment and depletion, drives itself, finally, to a rock wall incised with a prehistoric carving. There it halts, observing the first, ancient human testimony to the power and strength of form—a form that takes its own inspiration from the contours of its rock matrix:

> There a drinking deer
> is cut into rock,
> its haunch and neck
> rise with the contours,
>
> the incised outline
> curves to a strained
> expectant muzzle
> and a nostril flared
>
> at a dried-up source.

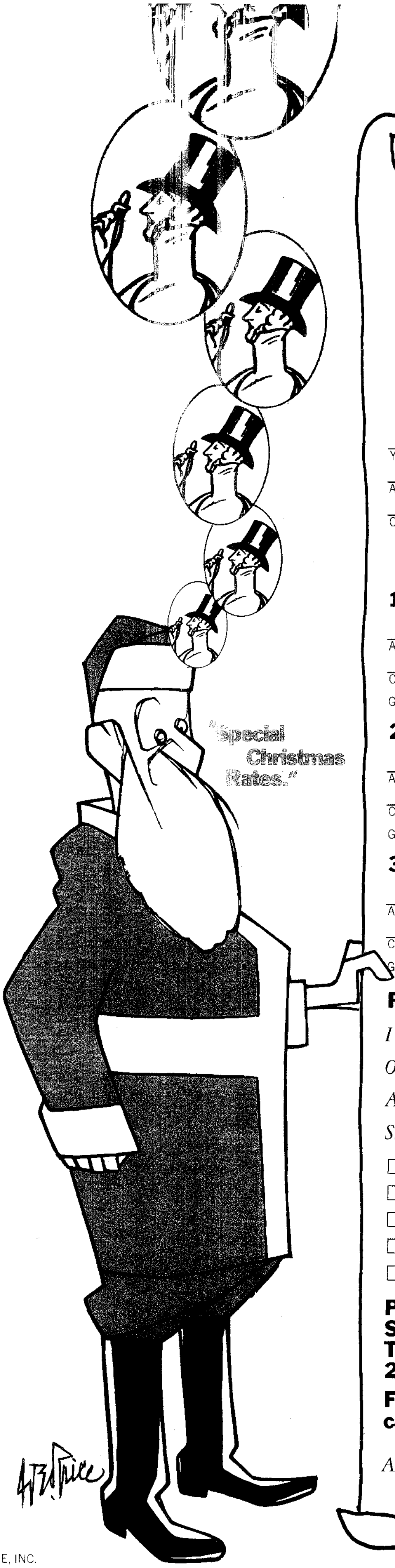
The poet would "meditate/that stone-faced vigil" of the drinking deer

> until the long dumbfounded
> spirit broke cover
> to raise a dust
> in the font of exhaustion.

"Dumbfounded" is one of the words in this volume (others are "bewildered," "defensive," "evasion," "guilty," "complaisant," and "emptied") which convey the many confusions and fears undergone by any independent mind in defining and defending its own solitude. Against these self-doubts—arising from the social disobedience so necessary for art but so disturbing to the hitherto obedient—are set various phrases of clarity and self-fortification. Some are sensual—"hands at night/dreaming the sun in the sunspot of a breast." Others are experiential—"we are earthworms of the earth, and all that/has gone through us is what will be our trace." Still others are aesthetic. In his tribute to Hardy, "The Birthplace," for example, Heaney remembers how as a boy he found in Hardy a writer describing the life he himself was living on an Irish farm. The shock of that *first perceived correspondence* between life and art closes Heaney's homage:

> Everywhere being nowhere,
> who can prove
> one place more than another?
>
> We come back emptied . . .
>
> Still, was it thirty years ago
> I read until first light
>
> for the first time, to finish
> *The Return of the Native*?
> The corncrake in the aftergrass
>
> verified himself, and I heard
> roosters and dogs, the very same
> as if he had written them.

Poems like "The Birthplace" record, as I have said, private moments of sustenance in the wilderness of middle life. This wilderness necessarily includes for Heaney the state of his country, and there are many direct, and some indirect, references here to Heaney's troubled relation to the insoluble events in Northern Ireland. The dangers of propaganda and of loyalties unmediated by intelligence haunt any writer born into historical crisis. Heaney quotes Czeslaw Milosz's "Native Realm": "I was stretched between contemplation of a motionless point and the command to participate actively in history." The contemplation of a motionless point—as one pole



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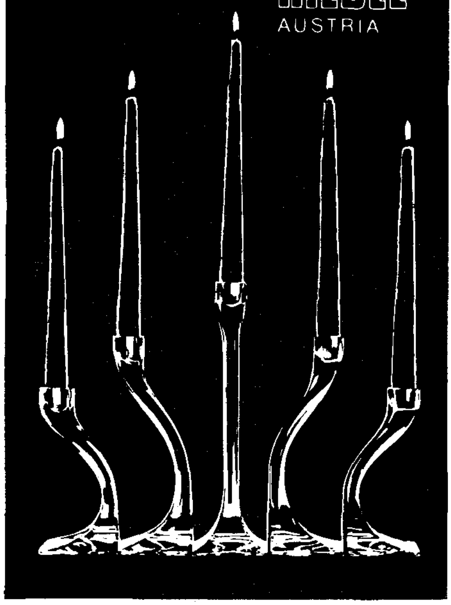

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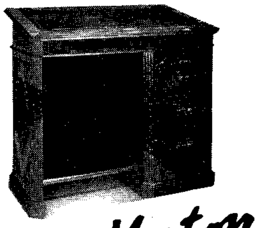

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of the artist's duty—is reflected here in Heaney's ascetic translation, in the "Station Island" sequence, of a poem by John of the Cross on the dark night of the soul; the command to participate actively in history is reflected in the terse and committed poem "Chekhov on Sakhalin," based on a fragment of Chekhov's life. In the poem, Chekhov drains a last glass of Moscow cognac after travelling thousands of miles from Moscow, through Siberia, to the island of Sakhalin, between Russia and Japan; the island is a Russian prison colony, and Chekhov is paying his "debt to medicine" by investigating the penal conditions. He forces himself to watch floggings and then leaves to write about them, "to try for the right tone—not tract, not thesis." Chekhov's predicament is that of any poet trying to write about historical conditions, but the deeper truth of the poem appears in the closing lines, in which Chekhov's own origin ("born, you may say, under the counter") compels him to his present expiatory inquiry, and to a perpetual identification with the convicts:

He who thought to squeeze
His slave's blood out and waken the free man
Shadowed a convict guide through Sakhalin.

For the last twenty years, each of Heaney's books—from "Death of a Naturalist" (1966) through "Station Island"—has exhibited an experimental advance on its predecessors. Without losing his early sensual depth and sympathy, Heaney has added social and political dimensions to his writing. In assimilating the mythical and organic voice of "Door Into the Dark" (1969) to the compelled social voice of "Wintering Out" (1972), with its epigraph on "the new camp for the internees," Heaney assumed a civic relation to his larger society—a position consolidated in "North" (1975), one of the few unforgettable single volumes published in English since the modernist era. In "Field Work," the formality of Heaney's earlier prosody relaxed into a deft and unassuming phrasal and conversational line—a stylistic consequence of letting the political and social dimensions of life in Northern Ireland invade his adolescent world of nests, aeries, and immemorial agricultural rituals. "I remember writing a letter to Brian Friel just after 'North' was published," Heaney once remarked, "saying I no longer wanted a door into the dark—I want a door into the light. . . . I really wanted to come back to be able to use the first person singular to mean *me* and my lifetime."

It is this completed voice that speaks in "Station Island." When a poet remakes his voice, everything already said has to be said over, in the new, more adequate tonality and diction. The imagination, as long as it remains alive, never ceases to reconsider and to rewrite the past; its poems are circumscribed by the potential adventures of the voice. If a poetic voice lacks volatility and modulation, it cannot be convincing in dramas of volatility and modulation; if it lacks a public dimension, it cannot enunciate public life; if it is wanting in inwardness, it cannot convey private intensity. To attempt a new complexity of voice is to create future possibilities for one's past; and in this volume Heaney has in effect rescanned his past, using the accomplished and complicated voice of his fifth decade. The earliest voice, the limited one inherited from ancestors, will "have to be unlearned":

even though from there on everything
is going to be learning.

So the twine unwinds and loosely widens
backward through areas that forwarded
understandings of all I would undertake.

Heaney's present voice benefits from his recent work on "Sweeney Astray" (1984), a translation of a medieval Irish poem, "Buile Suibhne," in which Sweeney, an Irish king, is cursed by the priest Ronan, who turns him into a bird. Sweeney's dour and lively voice from the trees is blended with Heaney's own in the group of poems making up the third part of the "Station Island" volume, a sequence called "Sweeney Redivivus." These poems form a dry and almost peremptory autobiography, stunningly different from the warm-fleshed account given in Heaney's early books.

It is difficult to choose among the Sweeney poems, since they so illuminate each other. For a view of Heaney's current hard poetic, one would have to quote his poem on Cézanne, called simply "An Artist":

I love the thought of his anger.
His obstinacy against the rock, his coercion
of the substance from green apples.

The way he was a dog barking
at the image of himself barking.
And his hatred of his own embrace
of working as the only thing that worked.

For an impression of Sweeney's tart

spite—a tone perhaps impossible for Heaney *in propria persona*—one would have to read Sweeney's hatred for the cleric who, bringing Christianity to Ireland, robbed him of his native ground:

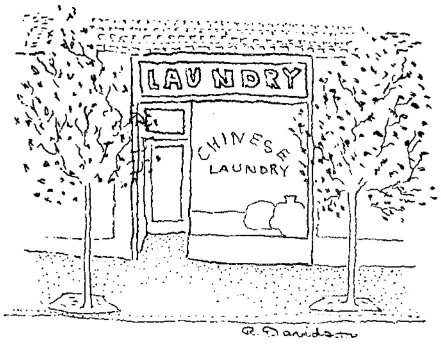
> If he had stuck to his own
> cramp-jawed abbesses and intoners
> dibbling round the enclosure,
>
> his Latin and blather of love,
> his parchments and scheming
> in letters shipped over water—
>
> but no, he overbore
> with his unctions and orders,
> he had to get in on the ground.

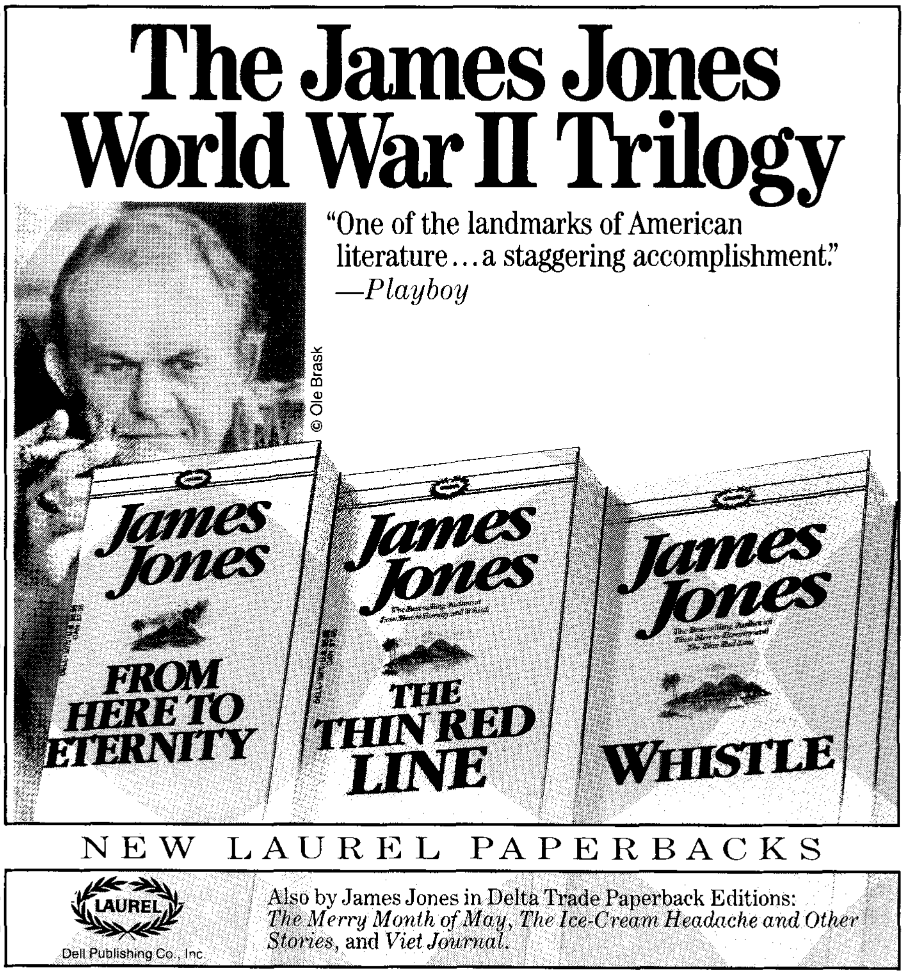
If one wanted to see Heaney's first moments as a modern writer, the old rural life left behind, one would quote "Sweeney Redivivus," the ironically dissolving title poem of the sequence:

> Another smell
> was blowing off the river, bitter
> as night airs in a scutch mill.
> The old trees were nowhere,
> the hedges thin as penwork
> and the whole enclosure lost
> under hard paths and sharp-ridged houses.
>
> And there I was, incredible to myself,
> among people far too eager to believe me
> and my story, even if it happened to be
> true.

The fine-edged precision of naming in these poems—the line of the hedges thin as penwork, the hard paths and sharp-ridged houses—has become for Heaney the ethic under which he works. He has written more than once about the "cool" temperature of early Irish verse, contrasting it with the warmer and rounder tones of English poetry; his current effort seems to be directed toward retaining the spareness and chill of the early Irish tonality while not forgoing altogether what he has called "those somewhat hedonistic impulses towards the satisfactions of aural and formal play out of which poems arise."

The "aural and formal play" in these poems is satisfyingly subtle. In "The First Gloss," for instance—the four-line poem opening the Sweeney

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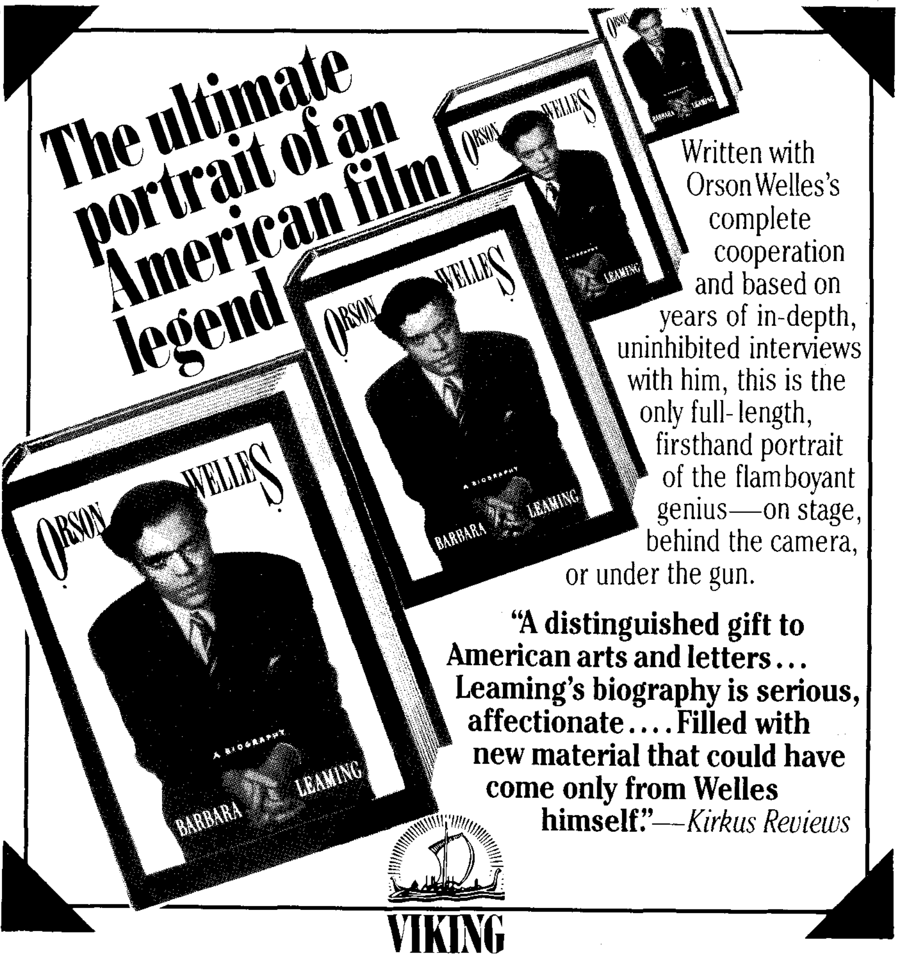
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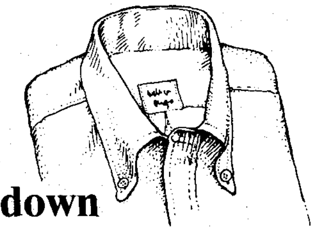

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sequence—the formal decisions are very modest: the rhymes are slant; the second couplet is composed of lines shorter than those of the first. But these formal moves stand for the two themes of the poem—disobedience and independence. Heaney imagines in this quatrain the first scribe who decided to violate a vellum margin with a thought of his own about the sacred word that he was copying:

> Take hold of the shaft of the pen.
> Subscribe to the first step taken
> *from a justified line*
> into the margin.

In one of his first poems, "Digging," Heaney had imagined his pen as a spade, and had made the work of writing poetry strictly analogous, in the mental sphere, to the physical work of planting and harvesting. This comforting fiction has been supplanted in "The First Gloss" by a recognition of the inherent outlawry and heterodoxy in writing—what it entails in the way of departure from socially justified limits and from the self-sufficient sacred word.

Readers who know Heaney's autobiography in verse from previous books will want to retrace it in this verbally firm and assured but psychologically beset and uncertain mid-life recapitulation. Those interested in the social history of Ireland can find here Heaney's visceral account of how things stand, and will notice especially the horrifying record of killings in the title poem, as well as Sweeney's tragicomic satire on cultural life in Ireland. (The *mots justes* for personal and public life, past and present, seem to come to Heaney with the unforced sureness of instinct.) For me, it is not chiefly the autobiography or the cultural history—though each is accurate with a poet's accuracy—that draws me to this book. Rather, it is a poetic handling of language so variable that almost any word, image, or turn of phrase might appear at any moment. In a typical moment, Sweeney gibes at the monks writing in the scriptorium:

> Under the rumps of lettering
> they herded myopic angers.
> Resentment seeded in the uncurling
> fernheads of their capitals.

Rumps and fernheads, herding and seeding, capitals and angers, resentment and myopia—these words from medicine, ethics, husbandry, botany, chirography, psychology jostle each other for position. (Of course, there would be no pleasure in this if the words did *not* embody as well the metaphorical animus by which Sweeney turns the intellectual scribes into thick-witted herdsmen, demeans their art to a venomous proliferation.) Heaney's voice, by turns mythological and journalistic, rural and sophisticated, reminiscent and impatient, stern and yielding, curt and expansive, is one of a suppleness almost equal to consciousness itself. The two tones he generally avoids—on principle, I imagine, and by temperament—are the prophetic and the denunciatory, those standbys of political poetry. It is arresting to find a poetry so conscious of cultural and social facts which nonetheless remains chiefly a poetry of awareness, observation, and sorrow.

—HELEN VENDLER

BRIEFLY NOTED

FICTION

QUINX; OR, THE RIPPER'S TALE, by Lawrence Durrell (Viking; $15.95). The good news is that in Chapter 1 the wounded writer-hero, en route from Egypt to Avignon, throws the notes for his next novel out the window of a train. The bad news is, as he concedes near this short and interminable novel's halfway point, that there is "no escape from the dozing notebook of the brain." "Sebastian" (1984), the previous, penultimate volume in Durrell's series titled The Avignon Quintet, left a lot in doubt, from the whereabouts of the hero's true love's mentally unstable sister (the eponymous heroine of the 1979 "Livia") to the mental stability of the hero's true love (the eponymous heroine of the 1981 "Constance")—a psychoanalyst having a lesbian affair with a schizophrenic patient. These mysteries culminate here in a sort of treasure hunt, after they have been partially explained by a German general and a highborn English gypsy fortune-teller. But the reader gets no help with the hero's dated mystical hedonism, which is not improved by exclamation points. For example, "You cannot help hugging yourself once you realise that there is no such thing as a self to hug!"

GENERAL

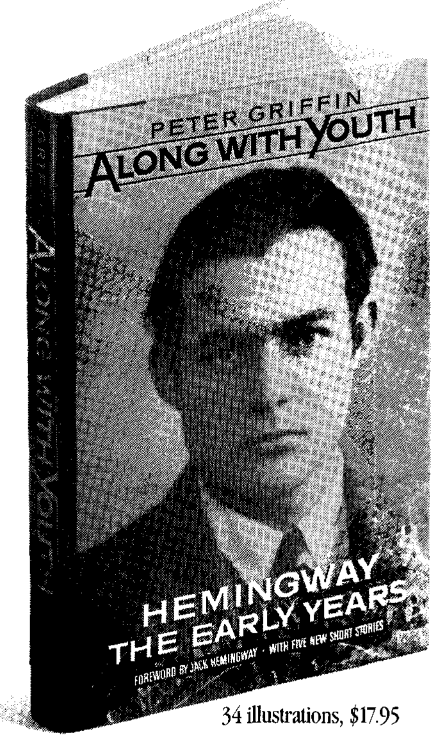
THE GLORIOUS ONES: CLASSICAL MUSIC'S LEGENDARY PERFORMERS, by Harold C. Schonberg (Times Books; $24.95). This is a fine, fascinating account of world-famous executants from the eighteenth century to the present. Schonberg insists that, with the possible exception of Paderewski, whose technique was inadequate, each of the superstars forwarded the art of music. Singers were the first internationally known performers—castrati, sopranos, and tenors, in that historical order. Paganini on the violin and Liszt on the piano raised instrumentalists to similar heights, and Toscanini was the first conductor to join them. The earnings of the great artists provoked as much comment as their performances, Schonberg tells us, and indeed they did make fortunes—Adelina Patti, for instance, seems to have been as rich as a Beatle.

VISIONS OF AMERICA: HOW WE SAW THE 1984 ELECTION, by William A. Henry III (Atlantic Monthly Press; $17.95). The author—who believes that backstage maneuvers and inside gossip have less to do with the outcome of a national election than what the voters see—records, on the Democratic side, the struggle for the nomination among candidates each of whom lacked appeal to some section of the population and, on the Republican side, the coronation of the incumbent. He shows what the candidates expected from this or that decision, how the media portrayed them, and how they adjusted and readjusted their positions and personalities. The reasons for Ronald Reagan's enormous popularity remain mysterious; Mr. Henry can report it and document it but not explain it. This popularity certainly helps account for the Republicans' success, but the author considers it equally important that when the Democrats spoke of the homeless and the jobless most Americans responded not with meanness or indifference but with disbelief.

NOTE: Paul Brodeur's "Restitution: The Land Claims of the Mashpee, Passamaquoddy, and Penobscot Indians of New England" has been published by Northeastern University Press ($18.95). Nearly all the contents originally appeared in *The New Yorker.*

MYSTERY AND CRIME

FIRST LOYALTY, by Richard Lourie (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich; $17.95). Mr. Lourie is the kind of writer who gives the thriller a good name—that is to say, he writes well



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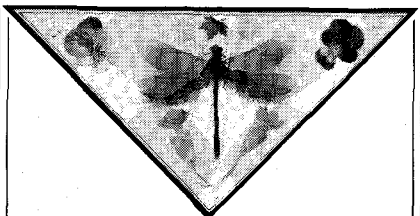

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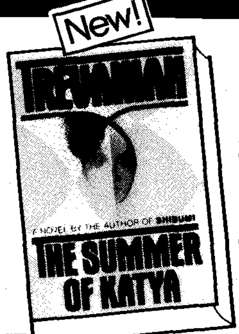

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enough not only to make the heart pound but also to please the mind. The bare bones of the story here: The Soviets have carefully contrived a poet known to the West as a valiant dissident who is in reality a K.G.B. agent. At the same time, a Russian scientific discovery of great importance seems to have been leaked to the United States. The poet is loudly "exiled" to the West, with the double assignment of spy and recoverer of the important science. Mr. Lourie's story never flags, but its propulsion owes as much (or more) to his exploration of the hearts and minds of its characters—the spy, his creator, an American translator of Russian, several members of the New York City Russian émigré colony, a homicide detective—and their observations ("America was like television, an amazing invention with such lousy programs that people forgot how wonderful an instrument it was") as to its twists of plot.

THE RED FOX, by Anthony Hyde (Knopf; $17.95). A first novel by a thirty-nine-year-old Canadian who seems to know intimately the several settings that he lays before us here—Charlottesville (Virginia), Toronto, Detroit, Halifax, Berlin (New Hampshire), Paris, Leningrad, and Harrisburg (Pennsylvania). His story is told by Robert Thorne, a young American expert on Russia and the son of a diplomat who ended his own life with a shotgun. It begins with a summons to Toronto from May Brightman, Thorne's onetime fiancée, whose father, a rich fur dealer, has disappeared and is feared to be a suicide. The problems and perils—and, eventually, some ugly revelations—that confront Thorne will hardly bear close scrutiny (although Mr. Hyde himself is apparently well informed on Russian affairs from the Revolution to the present), but no matter. "The Red Fox" derives from John Buchan—in its inexorable pace, in its even tone, in its feel for nature—and there is no better pedigree in the genre. Like Buchan's writing, it is—strangely, in this day—without a touch of sex. A selection of the Literary Guild.

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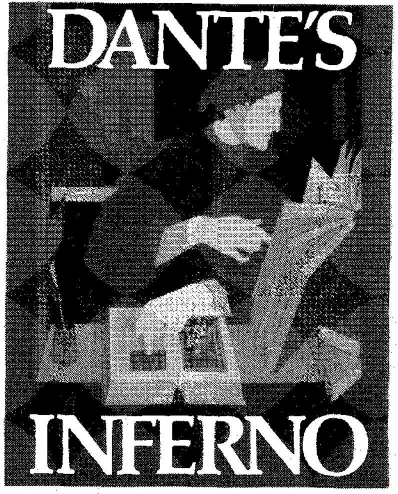

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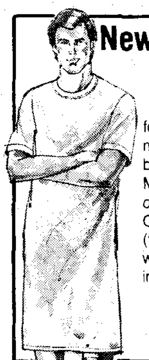

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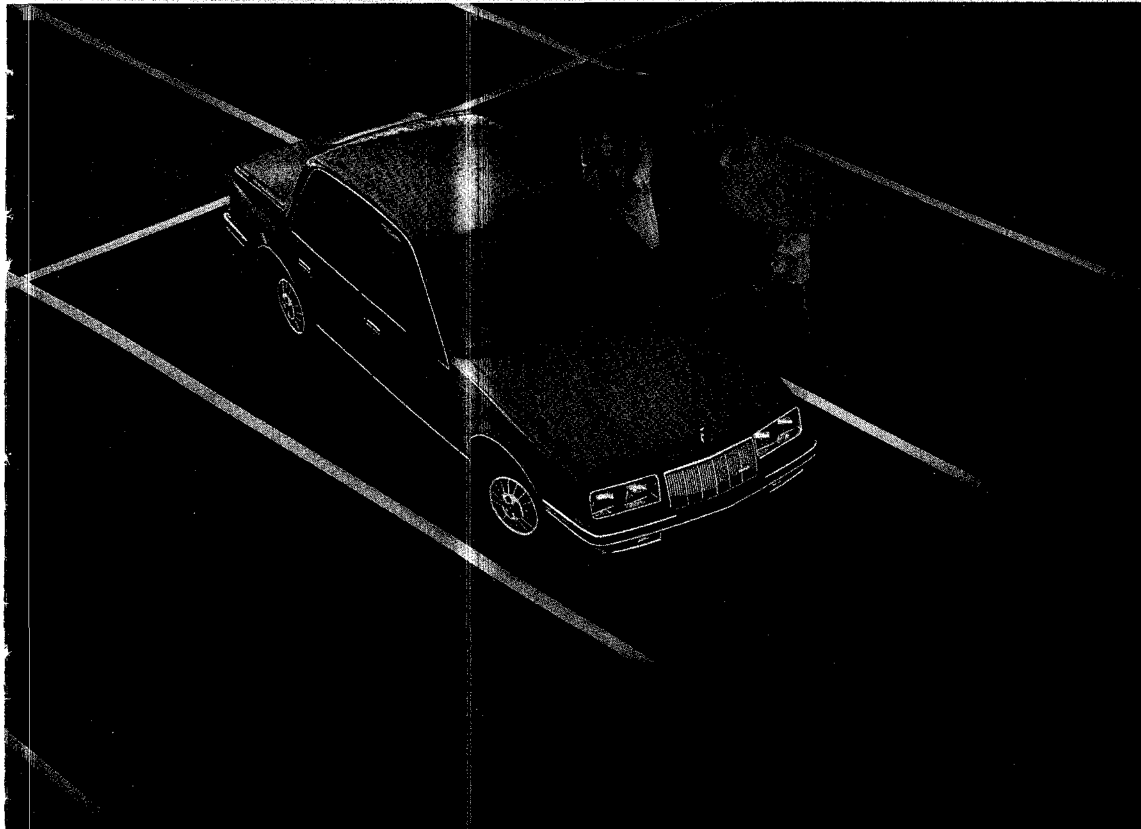

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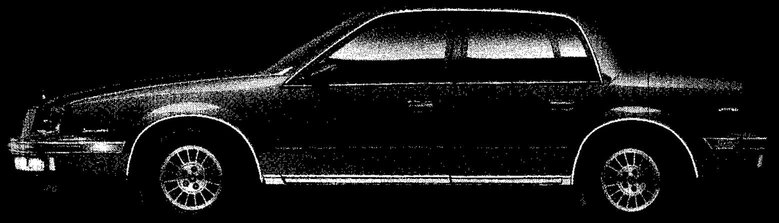

GM

Buick Skylark. For more information or a test drive, call 1-800-86-BUICK (1-800-862-8425).

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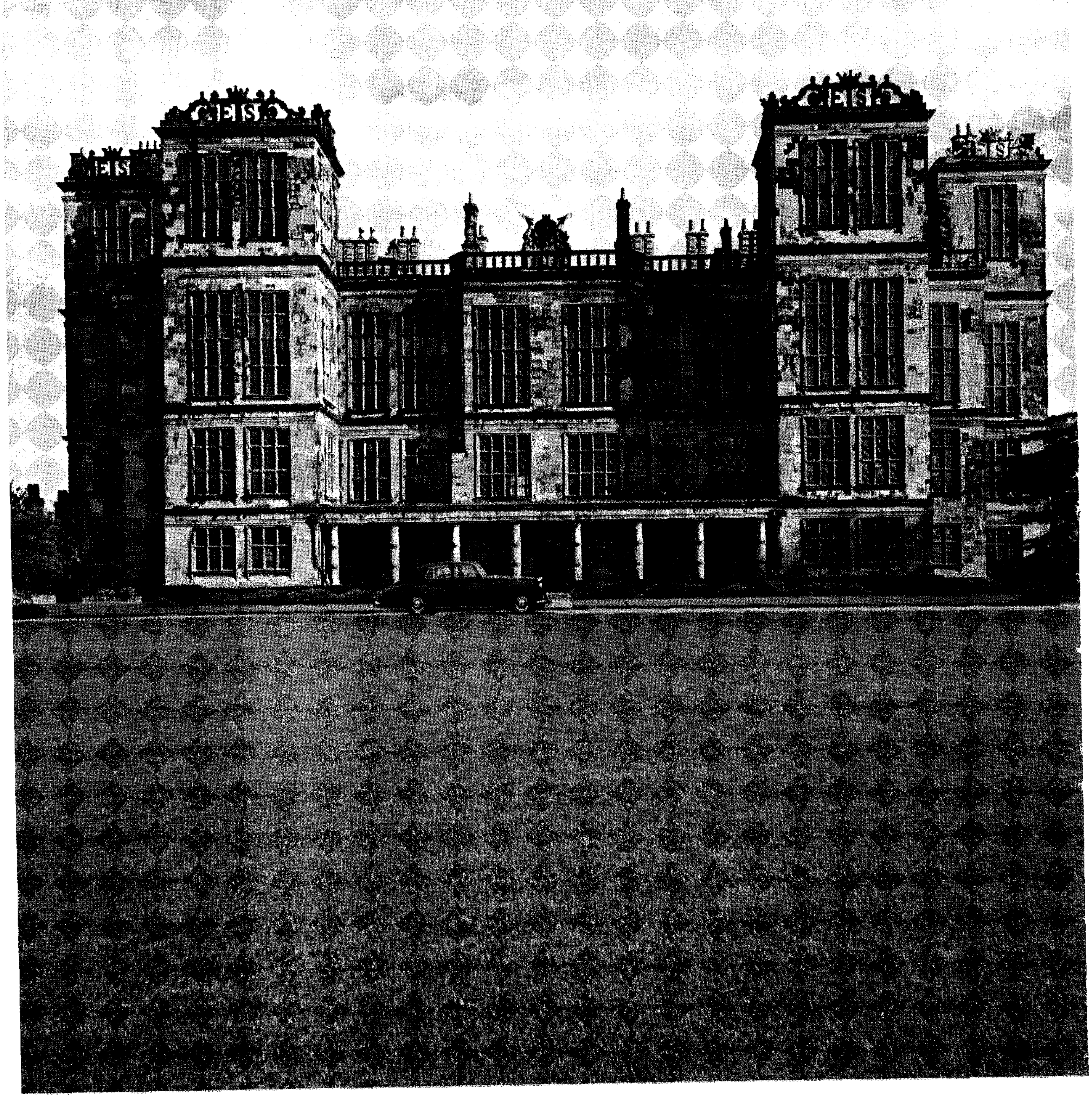

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